

Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany

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Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany

Edited by

Helen Roche
Kyriakos Demetriou



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Introduction



“Distant Models”? Italian Fascism, National Socialism, and the Lure of the Classics*

Helen Roche

It is a truth widely acknowledged that fascist movements tend to glorify the national past of the country in which they arise.¹ To name two examples alone, during the interwar years, Dutch fascists recalled the triumphant exploits of their maritime empire with pride, while Austrian fascists harked back to the heroic victories of the Habsburgs against the marauding Turks.² Yet sometimes, fascist regimes would seek to resurrect a past even more ancient, and more glorious still; a phenomenon which Ernst Nolte (who fathered the study of comparative fascism long before he fathered the *Historikerstreit*) ascribed to the search for “distant models”—the turn towards Greece or Rome.³ This phenomenon is particularly marked in the case of the two most powerful and most indisputably “fascist” regimes of all: Benito Mussolini’s Italy and Adolf Hitler’s Germany.⁴ One of this volume’s most salient aims, therefore, is to present an illuminating (if necessarily inexhaustive) survey of the whys and wherefores of this phenomenon of totalitarian Classicism, uniting contributions from scholars working in a wide variety of fields, including classics, history, philosophy, art and architecture.

* Much of the first part of this introductory chapter draws upon an essay entitled “Mussolini’s ‘Third Rome’, Hitler’s Third Reich, and the Allure of Antiquity”, prepared for a workshop on “Politicizing the Social and the Cultural in the Histories of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany”, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge (2017), in which the thesis put forward here is discussed at greater length. It is envisaged that the essay will appear in print in due course, and readers with a particular interest in the arguments adumbrated here would be best advised to consult them in this (more comprehensive and fully contextualized) form.

- 1 N.B. Throughout this volume, the specific movement and regime of Italian Fascism will be denoted with a capital “F”, while generic or non-Italian fascism will be denoted with a lower-case “f”. The same rule applies to the adjectives “Fascist” and “fascist” respectively.
- 2 Kunkeler (2017); Tálos (2013), 584.
- 3 Nolte (1969), 522.
- 4 Cf. e.g., Paxton (1998, 2004), who characterizes these as the only two fascist regimes to have endured through all “five stages of fascism”, from intellectual exploration to the achievement of power to eventual radicalization or entropy.

In previous years or decades, the “appropriations” or “abuses” of antiquity perpetrated under Fascism and National Socialism have tended to exercise a rather morbid fascination upon classicists and ancient historians,⁵ whilst remaining relatively overlooked by modern historians and scholars of fascism.⁶ This state of affairs has only recently begun to change, following the so-called “cultural turn” in the study of fascism heralded by Roger Griffin and Emilio Gentile, among others.⁷ Even so, there has been a tendency for scholars to focus on the more “modernist” aspects of fascist culture at the expense of taking the turn towards antiquity seriously; often, the latter may still be portrayed as mere legitimatory window-dressing.⁸

Arguably, when considering fascist appropriations of classical antiquity, we need to combine the best elements of both of these approaches—allowing for a sustained engagement with broader theories of fascism, whilst retaining the [ancient] historian’s detailed empirical approach and historiographical sensitivity.⁹ Such a fusion will enable us to pose important questions about the modernity—or otherwise—of fascism as a phenomenon, whilst also providing us with interpretative keyholes into which theories about fascist appropriations of the classical past may usefully be slotted. These could include Emilio Gentile’s concept of fascism as a “political religion” which “sacralizes” and “aestheticizes” politics, or Roger Griffin’s idea of fascism as a “palingenetic” form of populist ultranationalism with a “mythic core”.¹⁰ Indeed, we might even go so

5 For a brilliant and highly convincing analysis of this phenomenon, see Fleming (2008); for an example of it in practice, see Biddiss and Wyke (1999).

6 Two classical scholars, Volker Losemann (1977), and Mariella Cagnetta (1979) provided the first, undeniably groundbreaking studies of classics and ancient history under the Nazi and Fascist regimes respectively; the first major edited volume covering both regimes, Näf (2001), which contained an extensive number of useful essays, as well as a comprehensive bibliography of relevant items published before the turn of the millennium, was also fundamentally an initiative by classical scholars. Meanwhile, many of the most seminal histories or handbooks on fascism—including Griffin (1991), Payne (1995), Laqueur (1996), Morgan (2003), Paxton (2004), and Bosworth (2009)—mention classical appropriations barely, if at all.

7 Cf. e.g., Gentile (2003); Griffin (2007).

8 Arthurs (2012), 2. Gentile (2007) provides a prominent exception to this tendency, presenting a thorough examination of the Fascist attempt to reconstitute the present-day Italians as the “Romans of modernity”.

9 Arthurs (2012) provides a very promising example of this combined approach in practice. See also Kallis (2011, 2012, 2014a, 2014b) and Nelis (2007, 2014).

10 Gentile (1990, 1993); Griffin (1991). Griffin uses “palingenetic” in this context to mean that fascism is motivated above all by the desire for national rebirth.

far as to argue that the turn to such “distant”, antique models functions as an extreme—or even the ultimate—form of palingenesis, seeking the rebirth of a past so mythic and so ancient that it predates the nation entirely, and which may at times (especially in the German case) be completely divorced from its physical location too.

My aims in this introductory chapter are threefold. I will begin by highlighting some of the most salient appropriations of classical antiquity by the two regimes in question (many of which will be treated in greater detail in subsequent chapters). I will then set out to provide a potential explanation for both regimes’ recourse to such “distant models”, paying especial attention to historical questions of Italian and German national identities and their stability (or otherwise). Finally, I will close by giving the reader a brief guide to the scope of the volume in its entirety, showcasing some of the overarching themes and interconnections which have been brought to light by the chapters which follow.

Italian Fascism and the Cult of *Romanità*

Under Mussolini’s rule, ancient Rome was deemed to provide a perfect—and infinitely “flexible”—paradigm for Fascist dominion and conquest, as well as for the regime’s internal political order.¹¹ Whether it was being used to validate “back-to-nature” nostalgic ruralism and land reclamation projects, to promote “Roman virtues” such as strength, courage and martial prowess,¹² to justify the deconstruction and reconstruction of the architectural fabric of Italian cities,¹³ or simply to furnish the Fascist hierarchy with a sufficiently symbolic and imposing repertoire of images and political vocabulary, the myth of Rome seemed to have become “perhaps the most pervasive [...] belief in Fascism’s entire symbolic universe”.¹⁴ It was not for nothing that, in a speech proclaimed shortly prior to the March on Rome, Mussolini had proclaimed “*Civis Romanus sum*”.¹⁵

In general, it has been argued that three phases of *romanità* are discernible during the *ventennio fascista*. The first, which presented ancient Rome as “an ideal model for present revolutionary action, for the organization of combat,

11 Cf. Stone (1999).

12 Giardina (2008).

13 Cf. e.g. Laurence (1999), and the chapters by Flavia Marcello in this volume.

14 Gentile (1990), 244; see also the chapter by Jan Nelis in this volume.

15 *Il Popolo D'Italia*, 21 April 1922, quoted in Giardina (2008), 57.

and for the promotion of Italian unity”, lasted from the regime’s establishment in 1922 to the proclamation of dictatorship in 1925.¹⁶ The second reflected Mussolini’s burgeoning desire to convert the Mediterranean “from an Anglo-Saxon lake into a Latin sea” (as he put it in a programmatic lecture on ancient Roman sea-power—“*Roma antica sul mare*”—in 1926), and came to a head with the declaration of empire following the conquest of Ethiopia in May 1936.¹⁷ As Maria Wyke has noted, “Rome’s empire was now persistently mobilized to justify an aggressive foreign policy, imperial expansion, and a claim to new territories in the Mediterranean”, and popular culture, such as the heavily state-subsidized film *Scipiano l’africano* (1937), delighted in casting the African campaign as a rerun of the Second Punic War.¹⁸ Finally, in accordance with Axis policy, from the late 1930s onwards, racial interpretations of ancient Rome reigned supreme, and Augustus’ battle for births and stringent laws on citizenship were held up as a model for emulation.¹⁹

Throughout the *ventennio*, countless scholars, teachers, architects, artists, archaeologists and intellectuals of all stripes responded to Mussolini’s antique vision, building a consensus “from below”, and lending credence, expression and propagandistic power to the cult of *romanità*. Despite the fact that Roman images dominated the Fascist visual imaginary, from the fasces and the Roman she-wolf to the eagle-topped battle-standards and the ubiquitous legend *SPQR*, the pursuit of *romanità* was by no means a mere “directive issued by a totalitarian monolithic state”. Rather, it was the product of “complex negotiations [...] between the regime and the academy [...] and between intellectual currents that ranged from anticlericalism to Catholicism, modernism to historicism, nationalism, and universalism.”²⁰

To take just one example of this phenomenon, which has only recently been brought to light by the pioneering work of Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse, the Fascist accession to power heralded an unprecedented explosion of Latin-language literature, “ranging from lyric odes in praise of Mussolini to prose orations extolling the new regime, from epics on Italy’s martial exploits in Africa to Latin inscriptions on monuments old and new.”²¹ Of course, some of

16 Wyke (1999), 168.

17 Quartermaine (1995), 204.

18 Wyke (1999), 168; Quartermaine (1995), 206. On *Scipione l'Africano* and other classicizing propaganda on the Fascist silver screen, see Arthur J. Pomeroy’s chapter in this volume.

19 Quartermaine (1995), 209.

20 Arthurs (2012), 6; cf. Visser (1992); Stone (1999); Giardina (2008), 73. See also the chapter by Joshua Arthurs in this volume.

21 Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016a), 217.

these efforts were promoted officially, such as school texts, the Fascist teacher association ANIF's "Concorso Dux" competition for the best Latin poem in honor of Mussolini, or the *Codex Fori Mussolini*, a messianic depiction of Fascist history which, painstakingly copied onto parchment, had been buried under a marble obelisk in the Foro Mussolini in order to astonish future generations thousands of years hence.²²

However, other manifestations of this new fervor for *Latinitas* simply represented the unforced efforts of individual schoolteachers, intellectuals and academics who were keen to present Latin as "the perfect expression of the new spirit of Italian Fascism".²³ And, while more populist manifestations of *romanità*—advertisements for viscose starring the Dea Roma, or modern mosaics featuring tennis-players or lorries of club-bearing *squadristi*—might seem to us the height of kitsch, they were clearly seen at the time as effective ways of "marketing" the idea of Fascist Rome's antique modernity to the Italian populace at large.²⁴

Meanwhile, even if contemptuous foreigners and anti-Fascists might dismiss the Duce as a mere "sawdust Caesar" whose antique pretensions deserved only ridicule, Mussolini himself took such comparisons with the utmost seriousness.²⁵ He was said to keep a bust of Julius Caesar on his desk, lionizing him as "the greatest of all men who have ever lived" (or, depending on his interlocutor, the greatest after Jesus Christ).²⁶ Yet, given the shortlived nature of Caesar's rule, and his violent and brutal death at the hands of conspirators, this model was bound to be superseded once the "new Rubicon" of the March on Rome had been left behind. Especially once the perquisites of empire seemed to be within his grasp, the ascension of Octavian and his transformation into Augustus Caesar seemed to provide a more fitting model for Mussolini's own ambitions.²⁷ For the "Dux", the fall of the Roman Empire had apparently only been temporary, as pictures of him posing magisterially on horseback in Tripoli—accompanied by literal Libyan "lictors" in antique costume, bearing "authentic" reproduction fasces—were clearly intended to imply.²⁸

Even Augustus' subsequent deification seemed to find its mirror in those propaganda images of Mussolini which portrayed him as more statuesque and

22 Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016a), 219; Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016b).

23 Lamers and Reitz-Joosse (2016a), 232.

24 See the illustrations in Gentile (2007), 102, facing p. 183, and in Lazzaro (2005), 19.

25 Seldes (1935); cf. Wyke (1999).

26 Wyke (1999), 169; Demandt (2002), 285.

27 Thomas Wilkins (2005); cf. Fleming (2007), 344–345.

28 Silk (2005), 79–80.

godlike than merely human (the dictator was known to practice what he considered to be suitably “Roman” martial poses—chin jutting forward, back ramrod straight—in order to facilitate the creation of such iconography).²⁹ Indeed, Mussolini risked becoming ever more enthralled with his own myth and apparent apotheosis, not only adapting Augustus’ own *bons mots* for his own ends, but also buying into the flood of hagiographic encomia which claimed that he had equaled or bettered not only Julius Caesar and Augustus, but also Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, Trajan, and all the rest.³⁰ It was no coincidence that, after the Duce had been deposed, popular graffiti mocked both his Roman pretensions and his headlong fall from pseudo-divine grace: “*Voleva essere Cesare, morì Vespasiano*.”³¹

National Socialism, Greco-Roman Antiquity, and the Spartan Paradigm

For Hitler, no less than for Mussolini, Roman history provided an ideal “tutor for the future”, an eternal blueprint for securing and immortalizing imperial dominion—a fact which undoubtedly had a considerable impact on the Führer’s own self-conception, both as an architect and as a military commander.³² To Hitler’s mind, Rome represented the perfect paradigm for acquiring and securing the modern trappings and infrastructure of imperial power—untiring legions, colonial Autobahns as straight and efficiently-designed for military transport as any Roman road, and monumental architecture on a scale that was deliberately intended to dwarf Mussolini’s puny efforts.³³ Yet, when it came to finding a fitting paradigm for the “anthropological revolution” which the Führer envisioned, ultimately, the “Greeks of modernity” appeared more apposite than the Duce’s latter-day ancient Romans. When searching for a

29 Silk (2005); Gentile (2007), 133, 221.

30 Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 253; Gentile (2007), 137.

31 “He wanted to be Caesar, but died Vespasian”—Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 274. As Arthurs points out (2015a, 286), this was “a double insult, since not only was Vespasian a lesser emperor, but *vespasiano* is [also] slang for ‘urinal.’”

32 Cf. Losemann (1999); Quinn (2000). On Hitler’s attitude to antiquity in general, see also Villard (1972); Demandt (2002); Chapoutot (2016).

33 On the competition between Hitler and Mussolini over classicizing architecture, see e.g. Kallis (2011), 828–829; also Gentile (2007), 24, 147; Kallis (2014b), 13; Föllmer, (2016), 134–135, 146–147; Chapoutot (2016), 73–76, 364; on Hitler’s own architectural predilections, see the chapters by Iain Boyd Whyte and James J. Fortuna in this volume.

model for artistic, cultural and social life, or even for long-term colonization, it was to the ancient Greek world—and not least to the martial simplicity of Lacedaemon—that Hitler and many of his hierarchs turned with most fervor.

Hence, the National Socialist “new man” generally took the form of a young Greek Adonis, as petrifically personified in the heroic neo-Grec nudes of an Arno Breker or a Josef Thorak; he was to undergo an ideal “*paideia*” in the new Nazi “*gymnasion*”, which would provide him with a genuine fusion of physical and intellectual education, just as in ancient Greece; and he would reach the acme of attainment whilst competing in a new Olympic Games, whose tangible connections with the glories of ancient Olympia made manifest that consanguinary destiny which inexorably linked the present-day Germans with the ancient Greeks.³⁴ Indeed, when the German invasion of modern Greece began in April 1941, the Wehrmacht were encouraged to perceive the campaign as a mere “return” to safeguard their own “ancestral” land—an age-old belief in a mystical Greco-German kinship was forged anew in the fires of chauvinism and racial determinism, so that the spirit of that greatest of philhellenes, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, was even enlisted as the campaign’s spiritual patron.³⁵

Yet the Greek city-state which functioned most superbly as an avatar for the Third Reich’s own aspirations ultimately had to be Sparta.³⁶ It was not only that Hitler’s *Schwärmerei* for Sparta had always been particularly pronounced—for the Führer, she would always remain the “purest racial state in history”, as well as the true inspiration for the modern helotry inscribed into the *Generalsplan Ost*, the regime’s brutal blueprint for the utter conquest and subjugation of Eastern Europe.³⁷ Rather, there was much in Spartan history itself—the gruelling, warriorly training of the state’s youth; the putative eugenic policies; the obsession with heroic death, as embodied by King Leonidas and the three hundred—which seemed uncannily to mirror the Nazi state’s deepest aspirations.

Many outside observers—from France to Britain to Soviet Russia—commented on the eerie similarities which they discerned between Sparta and the Third Reich, and not only because they had been convinced (or bamboozled)

34 Cf. Wolbert (1982); Wildmann (1998); Weiler (2001); Roche (2013a), as well as the chapters by Wildmann and Roche in this volume.

35 Sünderhauf (2004), 344–352; cf. Meid (2012), ch. III.3.

36 Cf. Rawson (1969), 342; Losemann (2007); Losemann (2012); Roche (2013b).

37 Speech at the NSDAP Party conference, 8 August 1929, cited in Lankheit (1994), 348; cf. Hitler (1961), 56–57; further Roche (2013b).

by the regime's own rhetoric.³⁸ Unsurprisingly, all of these correspondences were exploited a thousand-fold by the Nazi leaders themselves, some of whom even made private pilgrimages to Sparta. Thus Goebbels declared, when he visited Sparta in 1936, that he felt "just as if he were in a German city",³⁹ while Education Minister Bernhard Rust was often to be heard proclaiming ominously (and with great emphasis) that the Third Reich must "*rear a race of Spartans, and any who are unwilling to espouse this Spartiate community must relinquish forever their claim to be citizens of our state.*"⁴⁰ Indeed, Reich Agriculture Minister Richard Walther Darré was so impressed with the Spartan paradigm that, in 1933, he drew up a new entailed-estate law based explicitly on Lacedaemonian legislation.⁴¹ Meanwhile, as World War II progressed, it became impossible to avoid the grotesque characterization of the German forces' catastrophic encirclement at Stalingrad as a modern Battle of Thermopylae—a propaganda conceit orchestrated by Goebbels, and performed on air with the utmost verve by Goering, Hitler's heftiest henchman, in his *Appell an die Wehrmacht* (30 January 1943).⁴²

Once again, one did not have to look far to find enthusiastic appropriation of these ideas by academics, teachers, students, artists and intellectuals, as well as the commercial endorsement of such Spartan aspirations by firms marketing new products such as "Sparta-Crème" (a brand of suncream distributed by a well-known *eau de cologne* manufacturer).⁴³ Moreover, one certainly did not have to believe (as Hitler apparently did) that the Spartans were indubitably blood-relatives of the simple peasants of Schleswig-Holstein, due to their shared predilection for "black broth", in order to hail the Third Reich as a totalitarian *Sparta rediviva*.⁴⁴ Indeed, it was under just such a rubric that the members of the White Rose resistance group castigated the regime in one of their leaflets, before their activities were brought abruptly to a cruel and untimely close.⁴⁵

Of course, none of this is to say that the German past was considered unimportant under Nazism, or to deny that models from other nations and cul-

38 Cf. e.g. Lichtenberger (1934), ch. 5; Hodkinson (2010); Losemann (2012), 284.

39 Athenian Embassy Report, 30 September 1936, quoted in Fleischer (1998), 135; cf. Roche (2013b), 91.

40 Cf. e.g. Rust (1935), 45 (all emphasis original); Roche (2013b, 2013c).

41 Losemann (2005).

42 Watt (1985); Rebenich (2002); Albertz (2006), 293–308; Roche (2016a).

43 Losemann (2012), 278–279.

44 Picker (1976), 101 (4 February 1942).

45 Losemann (2012), 295.

tures, such as the British Empire, the United States or Japan, had an important role to play.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, when a specific model from antiquity was being sought for the society which the Third Reich desired to construct, then that model was taken neither from Germanic nor from Roman history, but from Greece. Perhaps most tellingly of all, it was the Spartan paradigm with which the future leaders of the Third Reich were inculcated so assiduously at their elite boarding-schools, the National Political Education Institutes (NPEA) and the Adolf-Hitler-Schools.⁴⁷

German Philhellenism, *Romanità*, and the Discontents of Unstable National Identity

But should this seeming surfeit of Nazi philhellenism and phillaconism surprise us any more than Mussolini's lust to recreate the grandeur that was Rome? In what follows, I will argue that the German recourse to ancient Greece and the Italian recourse to ancient Rome performed a somewhat analogous function, in the context of a long period of fractured national identity preceding a process of national unification which was often perceived, both by nationalist contemporaries as well as by external observers, as "belated" and problematic.⁴⁸

Of course, neither the German pursuit of philhellenism nor the Italian relish for *romanità* went uncontested; still less were they unanimously approved—indeed, from the later nineteenth century, those Germanophiles were legion who would have preferred to forget the classical past altogether and to concentrate upon the Teutonic past alone, while anti-Romanism remained a long-standing feature of Italian political discourse, both before and after the city was crowned the national capital.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the veneration of ancient Greece and Rome as a means of bolstering and potentially stabilizing national identity can clearly be discerned in both cases, even if the German variant seems more extreme, inasmuch as it attempted to elide ruptures not only across time, but across space as well.

46 Cf. Nolte (1969), 523.

47 Roche (2012a, 2013c, 2016a).

48 On German national identity, see e.g. Breuilly (1992), James (2000), Vick (2002), Berger (2004), and Judson (2011). On Italian national identity, Duggan (2008) provides an excellent overview; see also Bedani and Haddock (2000), Ascoli and Henneberg (2001), Lyttelton (2002), Gentile (2009), and Patriarca (2010).

49 On anti-classicizing Germanophilia, see e.g. Marchand (1996), ch. 5; on anti-Romanism, see e.g. Lyttelton (2001) and Arthurs (2010).

The problems which beset the potential path to German unity were considerable—ranging from the utter lack of congruity between state borders and linguistic and cultural boundaries (and the attendant rift between *großdeutsch* and *kleindeutsch* visions of the German nation) to the later tensions inherent in integrating a populace which often bore far greater allegiance to ingrained local and regional loyalties than to the newly-formed nation state.⁵⁰ Although the Holy Roman Empire might in some measure deserve the designation of a “weak German proto-state”, it was nevertheless (to quote Stefan Berger) “a motley collection of hundreds of largely autonomous dukedoms, principalities, free cities and clerical fiefdoms which lacked any strong central authority [and incorporated] many territories where the majority of people did not speak a German dialect.”⁵¹

In the absence of any firm geographical boundaries within which to encompass a putative nation-state, the small minority of nationalist intellectuals who desired the unification of Germany in some form or another not only developed a highly cultural form of nationalism, but also engaged in what Harold James has termed “the promiscuous construction of a national image, a national identity, and a national mission. They went to classical antiquity as a guide; and they seized models and examples supplied by foreign countries”, using them as “building blocks”.⁵²

One of the most seminal of these construction blocks was undoubtedly the turn towards Greek antiquity, initially presented as a paradigm which could satisfactorily trounce the Roman pretensions of the French and their Napoleonic Empire, whilst at the same time endowing Germany with a superior sense of culture and a civilizing mission. In this context, Goethe’s exhortation to seek out the land of the Greeks with one’s soul might seem to be a perfectly legitimate response to the nationalist poet Arndt’s despairing cry “What is the German’s fatherland!?” Just as Greece had held her uncouth conqueror captive with her cultural virtues, just so would Germany triumph over French tyranny and find her place upon the world stage. While ancient Rome was often considered too French, too Popish, and too universalist to hold true sway over the German imagination, and while the Germanic past might still seem unpromisingly unrefined to any but the most enthusiastic adherents of *völkisch* nationalism,

50 On the centrifugal effects and relative strength of regional identities even after unification, and the difficulties inherent in creating a viable *kleindeutsch* national identity, see the seminal studies by Applegate (1990), Confino (1997), and Green (2001), as well as Glenn Penny’s more recent observations on German “polycentrism”; e.g. Penny (2012).

51 Berger (2004), 1.

52 James (2000), 6–8.

for many Germans (especially among the middle and upper classes), emulating Greece genuinely did seem the most effective route to cultural, artistic, and ultimately national greatness, as Winckelmann had once proclaimed.⁵³ This held true just as much in Prussia, the haunt of Wilhelm von Humboldt, doyen of humanism, as it did in Bavaria, the home of Hellenophile King Ludwig I and his son Otto, the first ever King of Greece.⁵⁴

Even after unification, national prestige projects such as the large-scale archaeological excavations which took place in Greece and Asia Minor towards the end of the century were largely framed in philhellenist terms.⁵⁵ Despite the growing popularity of more essentialist notions of what “being German” might consist of, and an increasingly virulent campaign against the monopoly of humanistic *Bildung* (with which Kaiser Wilhelm II clearly sympathized when he accused the *Gymnasium* system of turning out “young Greeks and Romans” rather than “nationally-minded young Germans”),⁵⁶ movements such as the “life reform movement”, the youth movement, and even the nudist *Freikörperkultur*, were keen to bolster their neo-Greek and neo-Spartan credentials, sometimes even affirming themselves publicly as “Deutsch-Hellenes”.⁵⁷ Philhellenism might have been only one of the many models available to Germany in terms of creating a serviceable national identity, but the idea of the existence of a mythic Greco-German elective affinity or *Wesensverwandtschaft* ran deep, and possessed an extraordinarily broad appeal, not least because it had been extolled by so many of the towering intellectual figures of the past century-and-a-half, from Winckelmann to Schiller and Herder, and from Goethe to Wagner and Nietzsche.⁵⁸

Moreover, the paradigm was an extremely malleable one, encompassing not only the glories of Greek art or the freedoms of Athenian democracy, but also the martial prowess and strict discipline of the Spartan state—a model which had always been particularly favored by the Prussian military establishment.⁵⁹ And, as racial theories began to proliferate from the *fin de siècle* onwards, it did not take too much imagination to reconstitute the “elective kinship” as a

53 Cf. Most (2002); Marchand (1996), 159–160; James (2000), 19–21, 44–49.

54 James (2000), 44–46.

55 Marchand (1996), ch. 3.

56 Wilhelm II, “Eröffnungsansprache zur Schulkonferenz 1890,” in Giese (1961), 196–197.

57 Sünderhauf (2004), ch. III; Losemann (2012), 259–273; see also the chapter by Daniel Wildmann in this volume.

58 Cf. the classic studies by Eliza Marian Butler (1935) and Walther Rehm (1936); also Marchand (1996), ch. 1.

59 Roche (2012b, 2013c).

literal kinship, justified by anthropological theories of mass migration which postulated that the Dorian race had originated in deepest darkest Thuringia (or thereabouts).⁶⁰ The Nazified forms of philhellenism sketched above had certainly not sprung fully formed from Hitler's fancy, like Athena from the head of Zeus. Rather, their gestation had been long, arduous, and influential, and although the existence of such ideas could never be said to have predestined or predetermined the use which National Socialism made of them, it was unlikely that the regime would ever have seen fit to ignore them entirely, given the enormous cultural capital which they had accrued hitherto.

During the course of the long nineteenth century, Italy also faced a not dissimilar (though arguably rather harder) struggle to forge a culturally-mediated national identity from an astonishingly disparate array of linguistically, culturally, and infrastructurally divergent states and kingdoms, in the face of seemingly intractable practical and political problems.⁶¹ Not only was the vast majority of the population indifferent to any loyalty beyond the local municipalism of the "*piccola patria*"—to the extent that onlookers in Naples or Sicily regarding the cheering crowds hailing Italian unification in 1860 could ask bemusedly and without the slightest irony, "What *is* Italy?" or even jump to the erroneous conclusion that "La Talia" must be the King's wife.⁶² Rather, the patriotic intellectuals who had conjured up and ultimately realized the idea of a united Italian nation also had to contend with the enmity of the immensely influential—and still temporally powerful—Roman Catholic Church, whose virulent opposition to the unified Italian state was so great that the Vatican did not even acknowledge its existence officially until 1929.⁶³ Perhaps most disturbingly of all, the gulf which existed between the wealthy, rapidly industrializing North and the desperately poverty-stricken, brigand-haunted agrarian South was so great that (predominantly Northern) politicians would frequently liken the Mezzogiorno to some hideous disease or disfigurement, and compare its lack of civilization unfavorably with that of barbarian Africa (sometimes even inflicting violence of quasi-colonialist brutality on its unruly and immiserated inhabitants).⁶⁴

60 Cf. Fleming (2007), 348; also Felix Wiedemann's chapter in this volume.

61 For an interesting comparison of the Italian and German paths to unification, see Janz, Schiera and Siegrist (2000).

62 Lyttelton (2001), 27; Duggan (2008), 211.

63 Kelikian (2002).

64 Cf. Moe (2002); Duggan (2008), 226–228.

Thus, the burning question “Where then is Italy? What does it consist of?” was as pressing for Giuseppe Ferrari and his compatriots in 1848 as it had been for Arndt’s non-existent “Germany” in 1813, yet the problem of “multiple Italies” was by no means resolved even once the state had finally been unified over a decade later (albeit more due to coincidence and external intervention than by the exercise of “the Italian will”).⁶⁵ As Massimo D’Azeglio notoriously and acerbically put it, Italy might have been made—but how was one satisfactorily to “make” the Italians?⁶⁶

Hence, to many of Italy’s leading political figures, the legacy of Rome seemed to provide a crucial piece in the puzzle of how to reform a reluctant and nationally apathetic populace into a united nation of patriots. Even prior to unification, many of the key architects of the Risorgimento, such as Vincenzo Gioberti, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Giuseppe Mazzini, had carried a torch for past Roman glories. Each believed in the symbolic potency of ancient Rome, not least because the last time that the Italian peninsula had been united had been under the Roman Empire, some 1,400 years earlier.⁶⁷ While Garibaldi was particularly taken with the idea of dictatorship (in its original Roman sense), Mazzini dreamed of a future “Third Rome”; he famously proclaimed that: “after the Rome of the Caesars, after the Rome of the Popes, there will come the Rome of the people”.⁶⁸ Count Cavour, somewhat more prosaically, also saw Rome as the best choice for the contested national capital, for it was the only city which possessed a memory greater than the merely municipal.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, it was Francesco Crispi, the self-styled “Italian Bismarck”, who first used the Roman Empire as a model for Italy’s ill-fated attempts to cut herself a slice of the colonial pie—resurrecting the idea of “*mare nostrum*” decades before Mussolini, and claiming that the greatness of Rome would always demand that Italy possess a proper empire rather than a little kingdom.⁷⁰

The House of Savoy also perceived the myth of Rome as a useful tool for furnishing the young kingdom (and its somewhat controversial Piedmontese ruling dynasty) with a prestigious past—hence such Romanizing monuments as the Vittoriano, or the official archaeological excavations and exhibitions which were devised in the service of *romanità* during the early years of the twentieth

65 Duggan (2008), 91; Gentile (2009); Ascoli and Henneberg (2001), 1–23.

66 Cf. Bedani and Haddock (2000), 3; Gentile (2009), 36.

67 Cf. Foro (2005); Duggan (2008), 128, 130, 156.

68 Duggan (2008), 128, 177; Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 169–172.

69 Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 186–187; Gentile (2009), 42 ff.

70 Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 196; Duggan (2008), 381; Gentile (2009), ch. 6, 66.

century.⁷¹ While the fasces and the Roman she-wolf had been familiar iconographically at least since the Risorgimento, the idea that classical history could form a seamless conjunction with national Italian history was imbibed enthusiastically by a whole generation of scholars and intellectuals, many of whom would later see no incongruity in furthering the Fascist “cult of *romanità*” along similar lines.⁷²

Thus, the necessity of both living up to and, in some sense, recreating the ancient Roman past gradually became part and parcel of the educated Italian’s mental furniture, and the disappointments and failures of the Italian parliamentary state in the decades prior to the First World War merely led nationalist activists such as Gabriele D’Annunzio to bemoan the extent to which the ancient ideal of Rome had been betrayed.⁷³ If Mussolini could overcome the “missed opportunities” of the Risorgimento and resurrect Rome more truly, then, in the view of many observers, that was surely a development to be welcomed.⁷⁴ From this perspective, the equation of ancient Rome with Italian national redemption possessed just as venerable a history as that of German philhellenism, and one which, without causing any unconscionable ruptures with the recent past, Fascism could just as easily exploit to the full.

As this brief sketch has demonstrated, there are undoubtedly salient differences as well as significant parallels between the ways in which these two classical models were deployed. Nevertheless, it seems that considering these two classicizing phenomena side by side can prove illuminating. In effect, the recourse to classicizing “distant models” in both the Italian *and* the German case reflects the culmination or radicalization of a pre-existing and venerable national tradition of laying claim to a classicizing national identity, constructed in the absence of a more satisfactory *national* past, due to the discontents of fractured statehood and late unification in both instances.

Indeed, this should scarcely surprise, given the paramount importance of cultural heritage in shaping nationalism, of which fascism generally constitutes an extreme and distorted, yet recognizable, form.⁷⁵ Fascism appropriates the ideas and traditions which it finds ready to hand in the nationalist canon, cre-

71 Foro (2005), 106–107; Gentile (2009), ch. 3.

72 Lazzaro (2005), 16; Visser (1992), 7–8. In this context, Emilio Gentile has argued that Mazzini sought to establish a new “political religion” centered around Rome, which later found its most virulent expression under Fascism; cf. Gentile (1993).

73 Duggan (2008), 177, 351–352, 375.

74 Visser (1992), 8–10; Foro (2005), 113–116.

75 Cf. Smith (1991), 71, 84; Kallis (2000), 78.

ating a kind of “fascist national vernacular”—a phenomenon which one might usefully compare with the nationally distinct, yet stylistically related manifestations of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century romantic nationalism found in figurative art or classical music.

Nor, given the salience of classical antiquity in providing states with a uniquely authoritative and “usable” national past, offering a symbolic repertoire of exceptional power and flexibility (particularly when it comes to the justification of revolution or the construction of empire), should it be surprising that two such self-avowedly revolutionary and imperialist dictatorships should find classical models so attractive.⁷⁶ Yet, at the same time, the recourse to “distant models” which held such high prestige value throughout the Western world was arguably based upon a desire to attain to an authority which extended beyond mere nationalist particularism.

On the Scope of This Volume

Attempting to provide a completely comprehensive guide to the appropriation of the Classics and the classical tradition in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany would by now be an almost unmanageable undertaking, given the breadth of the field. Rather, this *Companion* aims to present the reader with a smorgasbord of varied case studies, each of which can arguably offer a unique perspective on the matter in hand.⁷⁷

In some cases, groups of chapters cluster around a similar theme, providing an in-depth analysis of the subject in question from various viewpoints, and thus allowing the reader to appreciate the multiplicity and diversity of existing interpretations. This applies, for instance, to the chapters on the reception of Plato in the George-Circle and in National Socialist thought by Stefan Rebenich and Alan Kim respectively, or to the chapters by Flavia Marcello, Iain Boyd Whyte and James J. Fortuna in the final section, each of which provides fresh insight into the varied manifestations and functions of classicizing architecture under Mussolini and Hitler—arguably, the architectural language employed by both regimes performed a supplementary (yet crucial) ideological function, helping to create what Marcello terms “real-life stage sets for the theater of consent”.

76 Cf. e.g. Stephens and Vasunia (2010); Sachs (2010), 20–21; Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 126.

77 While in-text discussions of other chapters have been kept to a minimum, the footnotes contain a detailed pattern of cross-references which will hopefully enable readers to make the most of the volume as a whole.

The volume as a whole is divided into three sections. The first, "People", focuses on (real or imagined) collectives, as well as on the fate of individuals. Felix Wiedemann's initial chapter on the propagation of theories concerning the so-called "Aryan race" in nineteenth- and twentieth-century philological and historical scholarship begins by providing a piece of crucial scene-setting, inasmuch as it contextualizes our understanding of the ideological excesses which later took place under National Socialism, including the recasting of the ancient Greeks and Romans as "Aryan" peoples, the hallowed forbears of the present-day Germans. At the same time, Wiedemann makes it clear that the "Aryan" label never remained wholly unproblematic or uncontested, even when the Third Reich was at its height. Daniel Wildmann's chapter, which focuses on the portrayal of a purportedly "Aryan" Greco-German masculinity in Leni Riefenstahl's propaganda film *Olympia* (1936), goes on to show how the fruits of such "Aryanizing" ideology could lead to the Nazi regime's ultimate glorification of classicizing ideals of bodily perfection, whilst marginalizing supposedly defective "Jewish" bodies.

The following two chapters, by Dino Piovan and James Porter, shift their focus onto individual philologists' and ancient historians' reactions to the exigencies and persecutions engendered by the Fascist and National Socialist regimes. Piovan analyzes the loaded nature of scholarly debates on ancient Greek freedom under a dictatorship which privileged ancient Rome above all else, tracing four Italian ancient historians' political accommodations with or defections from the Fascist regime: Gaetano de Sanctis (then the doyen of ancient history in Italy), and three of his most celebrated students, Aldo Ferrabino, Arnaldo Momigliano, and Piero Treves. Meanwhile, Porter explores the effects of enforced (external or internal) exile not only upon three German-Jewish philologists, Theodor Adorno, Erich Auerbach, and Victor Klemperer, but even upon philology itself, in the context of their war-time writings. In both cases, a discipline which had once been conceived as a neutral means of illuminating earlier cultures was now transformed into an intellectual weapon, to be used either for promoting or for criticizing fascism, national chauvinism and political conformism.

The second section, "Ideas", ranges widely, with a particular focus on the ideological treatment of classical literature and ancient history in various forms of Fascist and National Socialist propaganda. Jan Nelis explores the "myth of Rome" which played such a significant role in the stabilization of Mussolini's rule, focusing on the activities of the Istituto di Studi Romani (Institute of Roman Studies), a highly influential organization when it came to propagating the cult of *romanità* to a popular audience. In this context, Nelis also highlights the not inconsiderable interaction which took place between the "polit-

ical religion” of Fascism and the traditional Italian religion of Roman Catholicism. Joshua Arthurs then goes on to provide an in-depth case study of the Fascist regime’s identification with ancient Rome through his analysis of the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (the Augustan Exhibition of Romanness), a vast archaeological exhibition celebrating the two-thousandth anniversary of the Roman emperor Augustus in 1937. The artifacts on display—over 3,000 plaster casts and reproductions in total—had in fact been amassed prior to the First World War, and the exhibition’s organizers therefore had to “fascistize” Roman material culture using a variety of museological techniques.

Turning to Germany, the next two chapters, by Stefan Rebenich and Alan Kim, provide complementary approaches to the reception of Plato. Rebenich focuses his attention on the circle of artists and intellectuals surrounding the mystagogic poet Stefan George, some of whom later became fervent National Socialists. He argues that their anti-analytical, “intuitionist” approach to the philosopher’s writings had a considerable influence on the scholarship of their day, bolstering ideas of aristocratic educational elitism among philologists and philosophers alike. Kim then demonstrates the ways in which such approaches paved the way for the wholly ideological and politicized readings of Plato which came to the fore during the Third Reich. In these interpretations, Plato’s dialectic rationalism was wholly ignored; instead, his thought was portrayed as fundamentally anti-individualist and anti-humanist.

Finally, Helen Roche and Arthur J. Pomeroy examine two very different forms of classical propaganda—the first peddled in education, the second in the cinema. Through analyzing the National Socialist Teachers’ League classics journal, *Die Alten Sprachen*, Roche finds that, whether seeking to portray ancient Sparta as a prototype of the Nazi “racial state”, identifying Socrates as an ancient representative of the Jewish intelligentsia, or treating the Roman Empire as a model for Hitler’s own imperial project, classics teachers in the Third Reich often sought to present the ancient past as an explicit “paradigm and warning” for the National Socialist present. Meanwhile, Pomeroy finds that, although feature-films on classical subjects were few and far between in both Italy and Germany, the Fascist regime offered substantial financial aid to enlist Italy’s finest talents in the filming of *Scipione l’africano* (1937), providing the production team with assistance from the armed forces, as well as substantial publicity via weekly newsreels. Scipio Africanus, the film’s hero, was portrayed as a prefiguration of Benito Mussolini, while Rome’s war with Carthage was mapped onto the revanchist Italian invasion of Abyssinia.

The third section, “Places”, completes our journey by showing how the ideas delineated in the first two sections could ultimately be forged into more concrete and enduring manifestations of the myth of Greece or Rome. Stefan

Altekamp offers a thorough survey of current research on classical archaeology during the Third Reich, focusing in particular on the discipline's place in the academy, as well as on the fate of archaeology (and archaeologists) in wartime. Subsequently, Flavia Marcello treats the propagandistic blend of dictatorial authority and hallowed tradition exercised by the use of *romanità* in Fascist architecture, before moving on to consider Mussolini's desire to create a new imperial city of Rome through archaeological and architectural interventions, shaping and molding the city's physical fabric in order to create a graven image of the past which could provide the foundations for the will to endure into the future.

As a German counter-example, Iain Boyd Whyte then goes on to provide an in-depth analysis of the many ways in which the National Socialist government used and abused the classical canon of architecture to promote its ideological, cultural, and propagandistic goals, resulting in what he terms a form of "carcass Classicism", which echoed the structural forms of antiquity without ever attaining the detail or refinement of the classical canon. The final chapter, by James J. Fortuna, compares and contrasts the classicizing architectural predilections of both dictatorships, concluding that, although they engaged in direct conversation with one another, the two regimes projected very different understandings of the relationship between history, aesthetics, and power.

Conclusion: Overarching Themes and Interconnections

Before bringing this introductory chapter to a close, it seems worthwhile to highlight a few of the most prominent themes which have emerged from the volume as a whole.

The first of these concerns the relationship between the "academic" and the "ideological", particularly (though not exclusively) in the realm of classical scholarship. Is it ever wholly possible to distinguish between those academics who were irrevocably "tainted" by their collusion with an infamous regime, and those who merely went along with its dictates "opportunistically"; indeed, can we ultimately ever separate "science" from "ideology"? How far did scholars succumb to the temptations of intellectual collaboration due to a perceived crisis of legitimacy, and how far were they able to exercise real moral choice in so doing? Moreover, how far did generational dynamics or personal background play a role in influencing how willing scholars (and others) might have been to accommodate the two regimes' ideological demands?

Indeed, we might argue that there existed a spectrum of ideologization amongst academics, school-teachers and other intellectuals, ranging all the

way from pseudo-scholarly falsification to minor capitulation (or even outright opposition, as demonstrated by the Jewish philologists featured in James Porter's chapter). As the chapters by Joshua Arthurs and Arthur J. Pomeroy demonstrate, themes were already present in many of the relevant ancient texts which needed little help to be portrayed in a propagandistic light—for instance, the clash-of-cultures narrative implicit in the story of Hannibal and Scipio Africanus, or the imperial ambitions of Caesar Augustus. Fascist and Nazi appropriations of the classical past certainly did not always need to involve explicit distortion or total propagandization.⁷⁸

We also need to bear in mind that a significant proportion of the scholarship on antiquity which was produced under Fascism was intended for an international audience of foreign academics, many of whom were highly confident in their ability to parse the differences between *bona fide* archaeology and propagandistic ideological posturing, as Arthurs shows in his discussion of the reception of the Mostra Augustea della Romanità. Thus, we should be constantly vigilant in our analysis of the classical scholarship and classicizing cultural production which emerged during the reign of the “Third Rome” and the Third Reich, maintaining a healthy skepticism not only towards the post-war canard that classicists were never true collaborators, but also towards the correspondingly one-sided view that interpretations of the classical past under fascism were always irredeemably ideological.

The second point at issue concerns the deep roots of both Fascist and Nazi interpretations and appropriations of the classical tradition in the past—the alleged caesuras separating dictatorship from democracy often ran less deep than we might [wish to] suppose. As Daniel Wildmann argues, the German veneration of Greco-Roman antiquity and the physical ideal of Greek beauty had long been a staple of the “bourgeois iconographical canon”,⁷⁹ while nineteenth-century theories of racial essentialism ultimately played their part in the racialization of ancient Greece and Rome in National Socialist ideology, even though they could never have predetermined its political triumph. Meanwhile, as Flavia Marcello and Iain Boyd Whyte both demonstrate, many of the architectural plans for the re-envisioning of Rome—or Albert Speer's “Germania”—had their roots in earlier eras and pre-Fascist urban planning.

78 This phenomenon can also commonly be observed in the treatment of ancient Sparta, such that one prominent German educational historian once erroneously assumed that an unattributed quotation from Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* 16 which had been printed in an Adolf-Hitler-School newsletter must undoubtedly have been composed by a Nazi official—cf. Scholtz (1973), 239; see also Losemann (2012), 280–281; Roche (2012a).

79 Marchand (2015) also provides an excellent (and highly telling) elucidation of this point.

From this perspective, even the Mostra Augustea della Romanità owed its institutional origins to a previous archeological exhibition which had been held in 1911, the Mostra Archeologica.

Finally, we come to the ways in which both regimes seem to have engaged anew with time itself, forging a novel historic imaginary in which antiquity was perceived as utterly contemporary, and the quintessentially fascist “new man” could appear in the guise of an ancient Greek athlete or a Roman legionary without any sense of anachronism. Instead of recognizing a complete dichotomy between antiquity and modernity, both Fascism and National Socialism attempted to blend the two, fusing and eliding past, present and future, whilst ennobling their claims to imperial greatness through the universal language of classicism. This, then, was no mere “reactionary modernism”,⁸⁰ but rather a form of “classicizing modernism”, in which any nineteenth-century tendencies to treat the classical as having little or no relevance whatsoever to the “modern” had been utterly discarded.⁸¹ After all, it was Hitler himself who had proclaimed history as the ideal “*Lehrmeisterin für die Zukunft*”;⁸² the idea of *historia magistra vitae* could thus reign sovereign once again.⁸³ Ultimately, the transcendent, epic time-scale beloved of fascism, with its cyclical view of the past, and its complex obsession with the rebirth of national greatness, could not allow for any contradiction between the glories of the ancient past and the triumphs of the modern present.⁸⁴

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80 Cf. Herf (1984).

81 Cf. Morley (2009).

82 Hitler (1943), 468.

83 This idea is also rehearsed, though in a slightly different context, in Roche (2016b), 86. See Quartermaine (1995, 203) for an account of a schoolboy’s essay, drawn from a propaganda pamphlet entitled *Civiltà Romana* (published by the Istituto Nazionale di Cultura Fascista), which also praised history as “*maestra di vita*” in the context of the Fascist rebirth of Rome. For a fuller discussion of the concept of fascist “anti-historicism”, see also Esposito and Reichardt (2015), 39–43.

84 Cf. Arthurs (2012), 5; Arthurs (2015b); Nelis (2007), 409.

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PART 1

People



The Aryans: Ideology and Historiographical Narrative Types in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*

Felix Wiedemann

Since the publication of Léon Poliakov's seminal, although somewhat out-dated, book *Le mythe aryen* (1971), the phrase "Aryan myth" has gained currency as a general term for European ideas about a superior Aryan or Indo-European race in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ The term "myth" seems too imprecise and vague, however, when one looks at representations of the so-called Aryans in contemporary accounts of human history—ranging from academic historiography to popular and ideological writings. Moreover, the term implies a certain epistemological position, one focusing on the false or fictive character of the content, running counter to a supposed philological or historical truth or reality. Of course, that the Aryans were a social or, to be more precise, an epistemic construction of the nineteenth century is an undeniable fact. But the same could be said in general of all the collective entities that historians refer to in their narratives, including those still in use today. From an epistemic point of view, there is no fundamental difference between the Aryans and, let's say, *the Greeks*, *the German people*, or *the Europeans*, since all of these collective entities are based on certain assumptions and are the products of social, political or historiographical constructions. In view of the highly political and ideological—mostly racist and anti-Semitic—implications borne by the term in the twentieth century, the phrase Aryan *ideology* might offer an alternative. However, the term's ideological charges resulted from a longer dis-

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1 See Poliakov (1974); following this concept, see also Siefert (1987) and See (1994, 2003).

cursive history that requires explanation and should not be taken as a given. There was no natural connection between the concept of the Aryans and right-wing nationalism, racism or anti-Semitism, and not everyone who used the term in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a right-wing nationalist or racist.²

For these reasons, I will take a different approach: in light of the fundamental narrative structure of historical accounts, I understand the Aryans basically as a (collective) character or narrative type with a more or less fixed role in historiographical accounts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³ This role can be defined as follows: The Aryans or Indo-Europeans were highly mobile peoples (or a race) with a primarily aristocratic and patriarchal social structure, who appeared as virile invaders or warriors wherever they went. In so doing, they either founded civilizations and states, or destroyed civilizations or states that were already decaying. To reference the German terms common at the time, the Aryans played a twofold role in history: they composed a *Herrenschicht* (a ruling class or caste) and appeared everywhere as *Kulturgründer* and *Staatengründer* (founders of civilizations and states); both roles were based on an additional belief, namely, that the Aryans were highly mobile, and had initially arrived as migrants from outside the territory of the civilization or state in question. It is important to realize that the Aryan narrative type features not only an ethnic or racial element but also a social element, indicating a power relation: the Aryans were considered to have constituted an aristocratic ruling class, as well as a distinct people or race. As I will demonstrate in the following pages, a highly romantic view dominated nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiographical accounts, one that presupposed the allegedly noble and heroic character of this race or family of peoples—a narrative type that became highly attractive for popular and decidedly ideological writings on history.

2 A famous example is the book *The Aryans* by the British-Australian archaeologist Gordon V. Childe, a committed Marxist, whose theory of the Aryan or Indo-European migrations did not differ much from that of the German nationalist and pre-historian Gustav Kossinna: Childe (1926); see further Veit (1984) and Trigger (2006), 235–248.

3 Since the publication of seminal books by Hayden White (1973) and Paul Ricoeur (1984–1988), a huge number of narratological studies on historiography have been conducted. For an overview of the debate, see Fulda (2014), Saupe and Wiedemann (2015). Although White (2013, 41–43) has recently analyzed the historiographical “description of past entities as figures of stories located in specific times and spaces” as part of a process that he calls “enfigurement”, he does not focus on the question of how historians arrive at the characters of their narratives and how they assigned roles or narrative types. But see also Rigney (1990), 103–170.

Languages, Peoples, and Races

To understand the historiographical and ideological importance of this narrative type, it is crucial to look at contemporary concepts of languages, peoples, and so-called races, and to understand how these concepts were intertwined. As I will shortly demonstrate, the construction of the Aryans developed from philological scholarship in the early nineteenth century, and can thus be regarded as a by-product of linguistic science. Although later philologists and anthropologists tried to sever the links between linguistics, ethnology and (physical) anthropology,⁴ for the greater part of the nineteenth century, no strict distinction was drawn between concepts such as languages and language families on the one hand, and peoples (*Völker*) and families of peoples (*Völkerfamilie*) or races on the other.⁵ What matters is that these concepts were considered as more or less essentialist categories that referred to real historical actors, and, as such, appeared as characters in historiographical narratives.

When historians in the nineteenth century drew upon linguistic classifications, they did so precisely because they identified languages with peoples or nations. These historians were not interested in languages as such; their central objects were the peoples or nations, which they regarded as collective actors in history, and which thus featured among the main characters of their narratives. Hence, languages and linguistic classifications simply served as indicators for the identification of peoples or nations. Most historians did not theorize this interrelation, but Ludwig Schlözer, one of the main proponents of German enlightenment historiography, did come up with general reflections on the use of linguistic categories for ethnology (*Völkerkunde*) and historiography. Just as the Swedish natural scientist Carl von Linné distinguished animals according to the shape of their teeth, or plants according to the shape of their filaments, Schlözer argued that the historian should arrange peoples in a certain order or system of classification according to their languages.⁶ In other words, lan-

4 In contrast to the English speaking world, the German term *Anthropologie* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries referred in the main to *physical* anthropology, and should thus not be confused with social or cultural anthropology. See in general Zimmerman (2001).

5 There were no clear conceptual boundaries between the German terms *Volk* (people), *Völkerfamilie* (family of peoples), and *Rasse* (race) in the nineteenth century. Even though *Rasse* seems to refer more to physical features, the term was used by philologists as well. Furthermore, it has been rightly emphasized that these terms are scarcely translatable. On the conceptual history of the term *Volk*, see the classic (though in some respects outdated) article by Koselleck et al. (1992).

6 Schlözer (1768), 22. On the importance of his concept for the development of modern ethnol-

guages served as the distinguishing feature permitting the identification and differentiation of peoples, or, more simply, languages indicated peoples, and therefore lent themselves to use as a tool by the historian.

Furthermore, in the early nineteenth century, the connection between the concepts of language and people grew even closer, given the rise of romanticism and nationalism.⁷ Far from remaining a mere signifier of peoples, language advanced to being considered the paradigmatic expression of the spirit of a nation or people, the *Volksgeist*. Consequently, for contemporary thinkers on language such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, it was impossible to distinguish between language and people: “Language is just the outward appearance of the spirit of peoples.”⁸

Against this theoretical backdrop, it is important to realize that, in the early nineteenth century, terms such as *Aryan* or *Semitic*, as Christopher Hutton rightly put it, “tended to be defined and elaborated by scholars of language, but historically they expressed the notion of *Volk* as a lineage group defined by its linguistic distinctiveness and territorial origin.”⁹ Thus, it is simply anachronistic to accuse scholars of this period of confusing languages, races and peoples, and to identify this confusion as a cardinal and fatal error finally resulting in Nazi ideology.¹⁰

Philology and the Origins of the Aryan Myth

The ‘discovery’ of the genetic relationships between several European and Asian languages—ranging from ancient Sanskrit, Old Iranian, Ancient Greek, Latin and Hittite to modern Slavic, Romance and Germanic languages—is said to have been the birth of modern linguistic science.¹¹ However, contrary to

ogy (*Völkerkunde*) and historiography in Germany, see Vermeulen (2006); on the epistemic function of distinguishing features in the eighteenth century, see Foucault (1971), 138–145.

7 On the romantic concept of *Volk*, see the articles in Bormann (1998) and Bär (2000).

8 Humboldt (2003), 312: “*Die Sprache ist gleichsam die äusserliche Erscheinung des Geistes der Völker*”; see Messling (2012) on this kind of linguistic determinism in the nineteenth century.

9 Hutton (2005), 97.

10 This is Poliakov’s main line of argument. See the convincing critique by Hutton (2005), 94–98.

11 There is a large body of literature on the history of modern philology and linguistic sciences. See, for instance, the articles in Hymes (1974), Mauro and Formigari (1990), Hymes

popular belief, the Indo-European branch or family of languages was neither 'discovered', nor was its existence established by Sir William Jones at the end of the eighteenth century.¹² On the contrary, Renaissance and Early Modern scholars were already well aware of the similarities and the relationships between, for instance, Latin and Greek on the one hand, and Old Iranian and Sanskrit on the other, and some of them even postulated a common origin for all these languages.¹³

However, since no general term for this branch of languages or peoples existed (Jones had no name for it either), it might be said that the Indo-Europeans, or rather the Aryans, did not exist as a distinct entity, or, to be more precise, as a scientific or epistemic object, until the early nineteenth century.¹⁴ Although Early Modern scholars did coin some expressions to refer to these related languages—such as the Japhetic or Scythian languages—none of these were congruent with the modern concept of the Indo-European, and thus none of them signified the same object. Moreover, it is one thing to claim a relationship between certain languages, and quite another to perceive this relationship as constituting an entity in its own right. In this sense, only modern philology constituted families of languages as scientific objects posing at the same time as both families of peoples and historical actors. From the outset, more than one name existed for this very branch or family of languages and peoples. Coined almost at the same time, *Indo-European* and *Indo-Germanic* are the most common terms, even today. The idea behind both of these compound designations was to create a word containing the names of the geographically easternmost and westernmost branches.¹⁵ Although supposedly of French origin, *Indo-Germanic* became the dominant term mainly in the German-speaking world, whereas *Indo-European*, thought to have been coined by the English

(1974); Koerner and Asher (1995), and the articles in Aurox et al. (2001); specifically on the German context, see Gardt (1999) and Benes (2008).

12 See the famous 'philologer passage': Jones (1807), 34–35; on Jones' role in the history of philology, see Campbell and Poser (2008), 32–47, and Trautmann (1997), 28–61.

13 On the precursors of the Indo-European hypothesis, see Metcalf (1974), Muller (1986) and Campbell and Poser (2008), 13–31; for a detailed discussion, see the third volume of Arno Borst's seminal work *Turmbau von Babel* (1995).

14 On the history of 'epistemic objects', see Rheinberger (1997); on the intrinsic connection between scientific concepts and objects, Rheinberger (2008), 2.

15 On the history of these terms, see Siegert (1942), Shapiro (1981), and Koerner (1989). However, were one really to follow through on this idea, the most appropriate term would be neither Indo-European nor Indo-Germanic but *Celto-Tocharian* languages.

physicist and Egyptologist Thomas Young, was more common in most other European countries.¹⁶

However, right from the beginning, both *Indo-European* and *Indo-Germanic* encountered serious competition from a rival term that appeared to have the advantage of having been derived from primary sources: *Aryan*.¹⁷ This term was in fact a loanword taken from Old-Persian texts, where it appeared as a self-designation of a certain group.¹⁸ Introduced by the French Orientalist Anquetil du Perron in the middle of the eighteenth century,¹⁹ and later used to signify the speakers of Old Iranian languages, in the early nineteenth century, the term was taken up by certain German philologists who broadened its meaning and used it as a synonym for *Indo-European* or *Indo-Germanic*. The philologist and romantic writer Friedrich Schlegel was a pioneer in this respect. In an article written in 1819, he claimed that *Aryan* had been the original name of “our Germanic ancestors” while they still lived in their supposed Asiatic *Urheimat* (original homeland), and coined the general term “family of Aryan peoples” (*arische Völkerfamilie*).²⁰ By the middle of the nineteenth century, the term, with this wider meaning, had been adopted in other European languages. Most influential was its copious use in the writings of the German-British philologist Friedrich Max Müller, one of the leading scholars on language of the time. Müller categorized all the languages of the Eurasian continent as belonging to one of three fundamental branches: the Semitic, the Turanian,²¹ or, last but not least, the Aryan, by which he meant Indo-Euro-

16 Young (1813), 255. The Danish-French geographer Conrad Malte-Brun is widely regarded as the creator of the term *Indo-Germanic*. See Malte-Brun (1812), 577–578.

17 On the history of the term *Aryan* in general, Siegert (1942) is still worth reading. The article offers an informative and source-based overview of the use of the term from the late eighteenth to the middle of the twentieth century, and is still a standard source for newer research—e.g. Sieferle (1987); Koerner (1989); Wiesehöfer (1990). However, as we shall see, the text, written by a member of the *SS-Ahnenerbe*, is deeply rooted in contemporary National Socialist discourse on the use and abuse of the term.

18 On the mythological background of the term, see Bailey (1987) and Schmitt (1987).

19 Du Perron (1768), 376; cf. Siegert (1942), 86–87.

20 Schlegel (1975), 520; cf. Tzoref-Ashkenazi (2009), 212–220.

21 On the history of the concept of the Semitic in philology, ethnology and historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Olender (2002); also Wiedemann (2017). The term ‘Turanic’ (or ‘Turanian’) was used to categorize several agglutinating languages and peoples in Europe and Central Asia; later, these languages were mostly classified as ‘Uralic’, whereas modern philologists disagree about the question of whether one can speak of a distinctive branch of languages at all. See in general Abondolo (1998) and Sinor (1988).

pean.²² Like Schlegel, Müller claimed that the name originated in the primary sources, and that it had once served as a self-designation.²³

At the same time, other seminal scholars, such as Friedrich Pott and August Schleicher, argued decisively that the term should be restricted to denote only the “Indian and Iranian branch” of the Indo-European languages.²⁴ In fact, at the turn of the twentieth century, most linguists and philologists, and historians as well, adhered to that suggestion, using Aryan in the narrower sense. Outside the academic world, though, the wider sense of the word—as a synonym for Indo-European—was becoming increasingly dominant.²⁵ However, it would be unwise to overemphasize this distinction, since the two meanings of the term, the broader and the narrower, did in fact coexist in both scholarly and popular works of the time. Furthermore, as we will see, the delineated narrative type and its attractiveness for racist accounts of history has never been a matter of vocabulary: insisting on the narrow philological sense of the term Aryan does not prevent one from writing about the supposed superiority of the Indo-Europeans or the Nordic race.

The Aryans in Nineteenth-Century Racial Science

In order to acquit philology and the language sciences of the charge of having contributed to modern racism, historians of these disciplines often quote Max Müller’s famous remarks on the fundamental difference between languages and races, philological and anthropological classifications: “Let blood and skulls and hair and jaws be classified by all means, but let us speak no longer of Aryan skulls or Semitic blood.”²⁶ It is not difficult to find similar assertions penned by physical anthropologists of the time. Felix von Luschan, one of the most influential anthropologists at the turn of the twentieth century, wrote an entire book on *Völker, Rassen, Sprachen* (“Peoples, Races, Languages”, 1922) in order to demonstrate the general incommensurability of philological and

22 See Müller (1855), 23–26; Müller (1873), 191–247. On Müller’s classification of languages see in general Bosch (2002), 185–242 and Masuzawa (2005), 207–258.

23 Müller (1873), 289.

24 Schleicher (1850), 123; also Pott (1840), 1.

25 See Siegert (1942), 97; for classical and ancient studies, see Wiesehöfer (1990), 154–160.

26 Müller (1901), 33. However, Müller himself was not so strict in his earlier works, and one can easily detect some paragraphs which make his romantic view of the ancient Aryans quite obvious. On Müller’s concept of race, see Bosch (2002), 201–207.

anthropological categories.²⁷ Nevertheless, although most anthropologists and linguists of the era agreed that it would be incorrect to conflate language and race, in practice, the situation was more complex. Even Luschan himself continued to mix the two categories in the context of concrete descriptions and identifications. The same applies to eminent historians such as Eduard Meyer, one of the most important scholars of antiquity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While highly critical of the use of anthropological concepts of race in his theoretical writing, in his major works, Meyer frequently referred to physical features and drew upon racial categories for the identification and classification of historical peoples.²⁸ Thus, Meyer was convinced that all Indo-Germanic peoples originally shared the same features: “tall, athletic figures with bright hair and blue eyes.”²⁹

It was generally assumed that the Indo-Europeans belonged to the ‘White’, ‘European’ or ‘Caucasian’ race.³⁰ The racist biases of European scholars in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are clearly evident in that they imagined the Aryans as being like themselves in appearance (or, to be more precise, like their image of themselves): in their minds, there could be no question that the original Indo-Europeans looked more or less like the idealized population of contemporary Central and Northern Europe—and thus, of course, they did not resemble contemporary Iranians or Indians, who belonged to the same stock, linguistically speaking. This assumption was legitimized by a significant shift in philological theories about the original homeland of the Indo-Europeans, the so-called *Urheimat*. Whereas early nineteenth-century philologists claimed that the Indo-Europeans originated in Central Asia, later on, this theory came under increasing attack by scholars who proposed a European *Urheimat* instead, replacing the traditional narrative of *ex oriente lux* with *ex septentrione lux*.³¹ This theory made a more ‘European’ appearance of the Indo-European *Urvolk* appear more likely.

27 See Luschan (1922).

28 Meyer (1910), 73–80; Meyer (1925), 247–248; see the countless references to physical features of peoples in his voluminous *Geschichte des Altertums* (“History of Antiquity”), published in several editions and volumes between 1884 and 1930; on Meyer’s view of race, see Hauser (2005).

29 The whole sentence runs as follows: “*Wo uns Schilderungen indogermanischer Völker bei ihrem ersten Auftreten gegeben werden, bei Kelten, Germanen, Slawen, tritt uns immer der gleiche Typus entgegen: hohe, kräftige Gestalten mit hellem Haar und blauen Augen.*”—Meyer (1925), 255–256.

30 On the history and political trajectory of this concept, see Baum (2006).

31 On this geo-historical re-orientation, see Wiwjorra (2002); on the history and ongoing

In addition to skin color, a long and narrow skull became another important feature of the Indo-European peoples. Early on, the Swedish anthropologist Anders Retzius, who had introduced a fundamental distinction between long and round heads (so-called dolichocephaly and brachycephaly) to racial anthropology, claimed that the long skull was a distinct feature of the Indo-Europeans, one which particularly qualified the population of Northern Europe as their 'heirs of the body'.³² As a result, the "long Germanic skull"³³ became a central marker for the Indo-European *Urvolk* in the anthropological and archaeological literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁴

Since most anthropologists were well aware of the inconsistencies between linguistic and anthropological classifications, the term *Aryan* began to disappear from the vocabulary of physical or racial anthropology. In its stead, anthropologists preferred to use geo-referential terms to denote races and types (i.e. names that refer to certain geographical regions or cardinal directions).³⁵ In this sense, anthropologists of the twentieth century favored the term *Nordic* type or race over *Aryan* or *Indo-European*. However, this was usually just a case of old wine in new bottles, a substitution without a change of concept: the Germanic skull, which had previously served as a key feature of the original Aryans, was now put forth as a key feature of the so-called Nordic type or race.³⁶

The Aryans in Historiography

As a mere language family or a race with certain physical features, the Aryans would scarcely have been of any interest to classicists or historians: neither root inflection nor dolichocephalic head shape has any historical meaning. The only reason that these features took on importance for historians and classicists was that they were thought to indicate a certain branch of peoples that posed as a central character in their narratives. Thus, the concept of the Aryan or

debate about the *Urheimat* of the Indo-Europeans, see the articles in Scherer (1968); for the recent debate, see Mallory (1997).

32 Retzius (1864), 32–33. In doing so, he drew heavily upon archaeological remains.

33 Schaaffhausen (1871), 57.

34 See Wiwjorra (2006).

35 On the question of naming races in contemporary racial science, see Eickstedt (1937).

36 See the classic works by Fischer (1923, 1927a, 1927b), Reche (1926), and Eickstedt (1934). On the history of racial anthropology, see e.g. McMahon (2007), Hossfeld (2005) and Etzemüller (2015).

Indo-European was charged with certain ideas about the character which these peoples allegedly shared, and their purported role in history.³⁷

The most important and most dominant of the historical roles assigned to the Aryans or Indo-Europeans was certainly that of the conquerors and founders of civilizations. Even for Schlegel, it was already very clear that the ancient Aryans were a people of noble warriors; based on the etymological supposition that the term derives from the Sanskrit word for glorious and superior, he called the Aryans a “warlike people of heroes” (*kriegerisches Helden-volk*) which always and everywhere appeared as conquerors and rulers.³⁸ The same applies to the influential writings of the Indologist Christian Lassen, who described the Aryans as noble men and people of good breeding, clearly referring more to a social than to an ethnic or racial distinction.³⁹ In nineteenth-century historiography, this role was not restricted to the supposed Aryan *Urvolk*, but could also be ascribed to the sub-branches of the Indo-European family of peoples. Most important in this respect were the ancient Germanic peoples (*Germanen*), who had been idealized and romanticized for centuries.⁴⁰ Drawing on this tradition, the role played by the ancient Germans in the eyes of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars of prehistory and archaeology was very close to that of Schlegel’s Aryans: they appeared mostly as heroic invaders and founders of states and civilizations.⁴¹

I do not have sufficient space to go into greater detail here, but I should mention that a similar narrative type existed in other branches of contemporary historiography. Martin Bernal, for instance, has strongly criticized an “Aryan model” in classical and ancient studies of the same period, according to which Greek and Roman civilizations were founded by northern immigrants. Although rightfully criticized for his sometimes simplistic view, Bernal has convincingly demonstrated that classical scholarship of the time came to be dominated by the view which held that the rise of Greek civilization could be explained by supposed invasions of Indo-European peoples from the North, such as the Dorians.⁴² A similar process took place in other historiographical

37 On the concept of the Aryan in nineteenth and early twentieth century classical and ancient studies, see the remarks of Wiesehöfer (1990) and See (2003).

38 Schlegel (1975), 519.

39 Lassen (1847). On these early constructions of Aryan history, see Marchand (2009), 124–130.

40 On the history of the romanticization of the ancient Germans, see e.g. See (1994) and Wiwjorra (2006).

41 See especially Wiwjorra (2006).

42 Bernal (1991). On the debate, see especially Marchand and Grafton (1997) and Marchand

fields, such as ancient Near Eastern studies. Most striking in this context were claims made by Meyer and other historians and Orientalists concerning the supposed Aryan ruling class of the Near Eastern Mitanni-Empire in the second millennium BC. To Meyer, it appeared beyond doubt that the relationship between the supposed "Aryan chiefs" (*arische Häuptlinge*)⁴³ and the older population was a power relationship between invading rulers and their subjects. Thus, as the Assyrologist Hugo Winckler put it, the Aryans were the "*Herrenschicht*" par excellence.⁴⁴ Archaeologists of the time believed that horses and chariots were originally introduced by the Aryans, embodying both their aristocratic and "chivalric culture."⁴⁵

In addition to political and ideological convictions and personal biases, theoretical grounds made no small contribution to the importance of the role of the Aryan or Indo-European in European historiography of the early twentieth century: at issue here are the dominant approaches of migrationism and cultural diffusionism.⁴⁶ There was an increasing tendency in classical and ancient studies of the time to explain cultural and historical change, and the so-called rise and fall of civilizations and empires, in terms of human migrations and invasions. However, such narratives, which clearly reflected contemporary colonialism and imperialism, necessarily required peoples coming from outside to be recast as invaders and founders of states, and as bringers of civilization.⁴⁷

Of course, far from being restricted to the Aryans alone, the historiographical role of heroic invaders and founders of cultures could also be assigned to other historical peoples: there was no 'natural' connection with the Aryans or Indo-Europeans. Furthermore, most historians and classicists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries presented a much more sophisticated and ambivalent picture of the Aryans or Indo-Germans, referring to other narrative types (most importantly that of the barbarians) or shifting between different roles. However, in order to understand the attractiveness of the Aryans for

(2010); further the articles in Binsbergen (1997) and Binsbergen (2011); more generally on the partial exclusion of Oriental history in nineteenth-century historiography see Meyer-Zwieffelhofer (2007).

43 Meyer (1925), 251–252.

44 Winckler (1907), 52. On this subject, see Dassow (2008), 68–90.

45 Meyer (1925), 252; also Götze (1936), 36–41. On the debate on the Indo-Europeans and the introduction of chariots and horses, see Raulwing (2004).

46 See the classical critique of these approaches by Adams et al. (1978); further Trigger (2006), 211–313, and Zimmerman (2001), 201–216.

47 See Wiedemann (2015).

nationalist, racist and imperialist ideologies of the time, the image of the heroic invaders and founders of culture was definitely the most influential.

The Aryans in Racist and *völkisch* Accounts of History

Self-evidently, there has never been a clear demarcation line between ‘scientific’ and ‘ideological’ references to the Aryans. From the nineteenth century onwards, the Aryans or Indo-Europeans appeared prominently in popular and more ideological accounts of history, which purported to overcome the constraints and limitations of the supposedly positivistic and narrow-minded historiography written by academics.

The most important contribution to this field was Arthur de Gobineau’s *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (“The Inequality of Human Races”, 1853–1855). As the title indicates, Gobineau chose to approach history rather differently than did ordinary historians; he intended to write the history of races in order to prove their supposed inequality. Accordingly, the “white” race was the most superior of the races, but “within this type” the “Aryan family” was the most superior.⁴⁸ Adopting a deeply pessimistic view of history, Gobineau presented a picture of a superior aristocratic caste of Whites or Aryans which had once ruled over non-White or non-Aryan populations, describing how this noble race became increasingly rare due to interracial mixing.

Gobineau’s work, which lay forgotten for some decades, was rediscovered by the extremely nationalist and anti-Semitic Bayreuth Circle around the composer Richard Wagner.⁴⁹ The most important contribution to racial history at the beginning of the twentieth century emerged from this context in the work of the British-German ideologist Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Wagner’s son-in-law, with his infamous *Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (“The Foundations of the nineteenth Century”, 1899).⁵⁰ While, in Chamberlain’s narrative, the Aryans again appeared as the main protagonists and heroes of world history, his actual focus was on the Germanic or Teutonic branch of these peoples. However, Chamberlain expounded on the Aryans at great length in a later book, *Arische Weltanschauung* (“Aryan World-View”, 1905), a depiction of the supposed religion and ideology of the Indo-Aryan conquerors of ancient

48 Gobineau (1915), 205–212.

49 Gobineau was translated into German by Karl Ludwig Schemann, a leading member of the Bayreuth Circle. On the general importance and reception of Gobineau for modern ideology of race, see Mosse (1985), 51–64, Priester (2003) 78–102, and Geulen (2007), 69–74.

50 Chamberlain (1932 [1899]).

India.⁵¹ Furthermore, although Chamberlain was far from the first to speculate about the descent of Jesus of Nazareth, his *Grundlagen* became one of the main sources for the so-called Aryan Jesus, meaning the conviction that Jesus was not of Jewish but of Aryan descent.⁵²

In fact, the overlap between the terms *Aryan* and *Germanic*, and the increasing identification of the two, became typical of German right-wing and *völkisch* nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century.⁵³ *Völkisch* was an umbrella term covering multiple, very varied groups which adhered to various versions of Aryan or Germanic *Weltanschauungen*. One of these ideologies was the so-called *Ariosophie*, the ‘wisdom of the Aryans’, founded by the Viennese writer Guido List. The Ariosophists tried to blend *völkisch* nationalism and racism with certain elements of contemporary occultism and esotericism. Accordingly, the Aryans or, to use List’s term, the “*Ariogermanen*”, not only embodied a superior class or race, but also possessed a spiritual and hidden knowledge about the secrets of men and nature.⁵⁴

While *Ariosophie* tends to serve as an example of the heterogeneity of *völkisch* racism, the bulk of extreme nationalist and racist accounts of history drew heavily upon Gobineau and Chamberlain. Authors such as Willibald Hentschel, who was actually a natural scientist, promised to offer new “reflections on the world and on history from the standpoint of the Aryan,” presenting the Aryans and the Germanic peoples as a conquering and supposedly pure race of warriors and state founders.⁵⁵ With respect to the 1930s, the most important contribution to this genre was the *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (“The Myth of the Twentieth Century”, 1930) by the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg, a book whose references to Chamberlain are not limited to its title.⁵⁶

One must, of course, look at the relevant assertions in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (1925/26) in order to understand the prominence of the Aryans during the ‘Third Reich’. In fact, among other topics, the book treats history to a great degree—contemporary and political history, but also general or world history. Considering *Mein Kampf* as a historical narrative, “the Aryan” poses in it once again as the leading protagonist. In his depiction of the Aryans as the one and

51 Chamberlain (1920 [1905]).

52 For the historical and ideological background, see Leutzsch (2012); on the importance of this claim during National Socialism, see also Heschel (2008).

53 See Puschner (2001) and Breuer (2008).

54 List (1908). On this branch of the *völkisch* movement, see Goodrick-Clarke (1985).

55 The German title of Hentschel’s (1901) book was *Varuna. Welt- und Geschichtsbetrachtung vom Standpunkt des Ariers*.

56 Rosenberg (1933).

only founders of cultures in history, Hitler was not diverging from other *völkisch* and racist accounts of history of the time:

If one were to divide mankind into three types: culture-founders, culture-bearers, and culture-destroyers, then, as representative of the first kind, only the Aryan would come in question. It is from him that the foundation and the walls of all human creations originate, and only the external form and color depend on the characteristics of the various peoples involved. He furnishes the gigantic building-stones and also the plans for all human progress, and only the execution corresponds to the character of the people and races in the various instances.⁵⁷

In presenting the Aryans as founders and conquerors, racist and *völkisch* writers on history, from Gobineau to Hitler, were clearly drawing upon older narrative patterns that had been assigned to this race or family of peoples by philologists and historians since the early nineteenth century. However, one must not lose sight of the difference: obviously neither Schlegel nor Meyer claimed that all human cultures had been founded by Aryans or Indo-Europeans, and none of those earlier scholars related history from a racist point of view.

Aryans and Semites

In *völkisch* and National Socialist accounts of history, the Aryans were always accompanied by their counterpart: 'the Jews'. The roles are clearly allocated in the infamous chapter on "the Aryan and the Jew" in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: "The Jew forms the strongest contrast to the Aryan."⁵⁸ In Hitler's world view, this antagonism clearly transcended history, taking on an almost cosmic dimension:

If, with the help of the Marxist creed, the Jew conquers the nations of this world, his crown will become the funeral wreath of humanity, and once again this planet, empty of mankind, will move through the ether as it did thousands of years ago. [...] By warding off the Jews I am fighting for the Lord's work.⁵⁹

57 Hitler (1941), 397–398.

58 Hitler (1941), 412. For more on this trope, see Wildmann's chapter in this volume.

59 Hitler (1941), 84.

However, the construction of the Aryan was not charged with anti-Semitism from the start, and, in fact, the ideologues of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who believed in the supremacy of the Aryans were not even all anti-Semites. Gobineau, for instance, was not interested in the Jews or Jewish history, and unambiguously assigned them to the white race.⁶⁰

Aryanism and anti-Semitism did become increasingly intertwined in the late nineteenth century, however. In his seminal work *Les langues du paradis* ("The languages of paradise", 1989), Maurice Olender drew attention to the philological contribution to anti-Semitism by showing how nineteenth century scholars presented Aryans and Semites as separated families of peoples or races.⁶¹ It should be mentioned that the relationship between both races in contemporary philology was presented in very varied, but always ambivalent, ways. There were scholars such as Ernest Renan who called the Semites an "inferior race", in contrast to the supposedly superior Aryans.⁶² Renan was far from being the leading Orientalist scholar of his time, however, despite the depiction of his role in Edward Said's academic bestseller *Orientalism* (1978), and he was heavily criticized for such assertions by his colleagues.⁶³ There were also Orientalists such as the Munich Assyriologist Fritz Hommel, who, in order to write an "apology for the Semites," conceived the relationship not as hierarchical and antagonistic but as a polarity; neither Aryans nor Semites could exist in isolation and, consequently, he appealed for a historical marriage between the two.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, since the terms *Semites* and *Semitic* were perceived as secular and scientific, they were soon adopted by those anti-Jewish propagandists who distanced themselves from traditional religious biases.⁶⁵ Although the

60 See Mosse (1985), 54–55.

61 Olender (2002).

62 Renan (1855), 4. On Renan's approach, see Almog (1988); Olender (2002), 51–81 and Bobzin (2010).

63 Renan posed as arch-villain in *Orientalism*—cf. Said (2003 [1978]), 130–148. Said regarded his approach as a contribution to the historiography of anti-Semitism, and presented a more or less homogenous European "Orientalism" as a "strange secret sharer of Western anti-Semitism"—see Said (2003 [1978]), 27. However, he did not enlarge upon this argument and, in fact, excluded the history of anti-Semitism from his analysis.

64 Hommel (1883), 45–46. On the concept of the Semitic in contemporary ancient Near Eastern studies, see Wiedemann (2015) and Bobzin (2010).

65 See Zimmermann (2005). However, since the term 'anti-Semitism' has come to mean modern hatred toward Jews, and has been exclusively used in this sense, it is simply an anachronism to "take anti-Semitism at its word, literally that is, as targeting all Semites

compound *anti-Semitism* was also introduced as a self-designation in the late nineteenth century, some radical anti-Semites rejected this term, because it seemed to include other Semitic peoples, whereas their animosity was aimed only at the Jews. In his infamous *Handbuch der Judenfrage* ("Handbook of the Jewish Question"), Theodor Fritsch, one of the key figures of the *völkisch* movement, who would later be titled the 'Old Master' of anti-Semitism (*Altmeister des Antisemitismus*), emphasized the racial difference between the Jews and all "other peoples of Semitic language" (*Völker semitischer Sprache*) who "stood in sharp contrast to the Jews."⁶⁶ Thus, the term *anti-Semitism* gradually disappeared from anti-Semitic discourse, but advanced to become the general term designating hatred toward Jews, which was used by opponents as well as by social scientists and historians to analyze this phenomenon.⁶⁷

The Rise and Fall of the Aryans in National Socialist Legislation

These discussions among *völkisch* and anti-Semitic ideologues aside, during the 'Third Reich', the term *Aryan* had only one meaning in everyday language: *non-Jewish*. Consequently, Jews were called *Nicht-Arier* ('non-Aryans').⁶⁸ This language regime was based on the so-called *Arierparagraphen*, legislation which excluded Jews from all kinds of organizations, clubs and social life, restricting membership to 'Aryans'. The history of anti-Semitic exclusions stretches back to the late nineteenth century, when several organizations and clubs in Germany and Austria introduced such rules. After 1933, restrictions of this kind became an essential part of official legislation, in the process of transforming Germany into a "racial state."⁶⁹ The blueprint in this respect was the *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* ("Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service"), enacted in April 1933. Under this key racist legislation, all civil servants (including teachers, judges, professors etc.) who were not of "Aryan descent" were forced to retire (as were political opponents of the regime). A further regulation implementing the law explained: "A per-

and not only the Jews" —Kalmar (2009), 136. Furthermore, there was never a "historically unique, discursive moment whereby whatever was said about Jews could equally be said about Arabs, and vice versa." —Anidjar (2008), 18.

66 Fritsch (1932), 18.

67 See Zimmermann (2005).

68 See Hutton (2005), 89–94; Schmitz-Berning (2007), 54–58.

69 Burleigh and Wippermann (1991).

son is to be considered non-Aryan if he is descended from a non-Aryan, and especially from Jewish parents or grandparents.”⁷⁰

However, as these explanations and definitions were anything but unambiguous, the administration soon confronted severe problems. Furthermore, questions and complaints from several Asian countries with a supposedly non-Aryan population provoked diplomatic problems. Thus, the term *Aryan* appeared highly problematic for the implementation of race laws on political as well as on legal grounds.⁷¹ As a consequence, the terms *Aryan* and *non-Aryan* were avoided in the subsequent racial legislation. Most important in this respect were the infamous Nuremberg Laws, the so called *Blutschutzgesetz* (the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor”) and the *Reichsbürgergesetz* (“Law on Reich Citizenship”) of September 1935. These laws, and the related regulations, replaced the term Aryan with the expression people of “German or related blood” (*deutschen oder artverwandten Blutes*), meaning members of peoples supposedly composed of the same basic racial mixture as the Germans. With respect to the European population, only “Jews, Negroes and Gypsies” were considered to be not of German or related blood.⁷²

The Aryans in National Socialist Racial Science and Historiography

The disappearance of the Aryans from Nazi legislation corresponded with their disappearance from contemporary racial science. As mentioned above, physical anthropologists had already abandoned the concept of the Aryan race at the turn of the twentieth century, replacing it for the most part with the idea of a Nordic race.⁷³ A look at eminent works on race from the 1930s and 1940s can easily confirm this: contrary to popular belief, the Aryans had no place in Nazi racial science. Neither the leading anthropologists and eugenicists, such as Otto Reche, Eugen Fischer, Ottmar von Verschuer or Egon Freiherr von Eickstedt, nor the more popular writers on race, such as Hans F.K. Günther or Ludwig

70 English translations of these rules are taken from the websites of the Israeli Holocaust Memorial *Yad Vashem*: http://www.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc10.html; http://www.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc11.html.

71 On the terminological problems which the state administration encountered in implementing the race laws, see Essner (2002) and Hutton (2005), 89–94.

72 See the English translation: http://www.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc32.html; http://www.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc33.html.

73 See Hutton (2005), 106–108, for a general discussion.

Ferdinand Clauß, acknowledged or classified a race called Aryan. Instead, all of them drew heavily upon the category of a Nordic race, one clearly marked out as the noblest and most advanced of races.⁷⁴ The two concepts, the Aryan and the Nordic race, were not identical, but in fact differed in a number of ways. Since the German people—like all peoples—were considered to be a mixture of different races, not all Germans were regarded as true Northerners. This principal inconsistency with German nationalism was already a subject of controversial debates within the *völkisch* movement.⁷⁵ However, with regard to the historical role assigned to each entity, the overlap between the Aryan and the Nordic race was all too obvious. In bio-historical narratives⁷⁶ of contemporary racial science (i.e. in the way that the origins of mankind and the history of its variations were presented and narrated), the Nordic race held exactly the same role that the Aryans did: the Northerners appeared as virile invaders and conquerors. I will refer only to Ludwig Ferdinand Clauß here. Emphasizing the aristocratic habitus of the Nordic *Leistungsmensch* (roughly translated: man of achievement) and his longing for infinity and spatial expansion, Clauß coined the term Nordic *Raumwillen* (will for space), using it to legitimize the invasion and colonization of other countries.⁷⁷

Catchphrases like ‘Aryan religion’ and ‘Aryan-Germanic history’⁷⁸ demonstrate that the term “Aryan” was still in use in the humanities during the 1930s and 1940s. But in these fields, too, it was increasingly being replaced by other categories. Ironically, it was a Nazi scholar, Hans Siegert, who wrote what may be the most thoroughly conceptual history of the term Aryan, vigorously arguing against the general and popular use of the term in the ‘Third Reich’.⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, the term Aryan also gained new currency in historiographical works after 1933.⁸⁰ I will mention here only the two most infamous National

74 See for instance Günther (1925), Clauß (1938), Eickstedt (1934), Fischer (1923, 1927a) and Reche (1936).

75 See Breuer (2010).

76 Lipphardt (2008), 35–38; Lipphardt and Niewöhner (2007).

77 Clauß (1938), 13–30; Clauß (1937). On Clauß, see e.g. Wiedemann (2012) and Morris-Reich (2016), 156–186.

78 There was an interdisciplinary project on the role of wood and trees for the Aryan and Germanic people (*Wald und Baum in der arisch-germanischen Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte*). See Rusinek (2000).

79 Siegert (1942). Thus, it is highly misleading to regard the plea of the author as an act of opposition, as Koerner does (1989, 170); on Siegert, see Hutton (2005, 97).

80 Most studies on historians during National Socialism focus on modern historians—Schönwälder (1992); Schulze (2000); Schöttler (1997); Haar (2000). But see the classic

Socialist historians and classicists, Helmut Berve and Fritz Schachermeyr.⁸¹ In his programmatic article on *Die Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients* ("The Cultural History of the Ancient Near East", 1935), Berve drew a clear distinction between an Aryan and a Semitic Near East, mentioning the contribution of the Aryan peoples, such as the Hittites, to cultural achievements.⁸² Schachermeyr dealt with the same question in his voluminous *Indogermanen und Orient* ("Indo-Germans and the Orient", 1944). Distinguishing the early Indo-Germanic Hittites from the later Aryans, he clearly adhered to the traditional narrative type of the noble aristocracy; it was the Aryans, he explained, who "brought the idea of aristocratic chivalry into historic life."⁸³ Nevertheless, the works of Nazi historians contained far more references to the Nordic than to the Aryan descent or character of certain peoples. The infamous subtitle of Otto-Wilhelm von Vacano's textbook on Sparta, *Der Lebenskampf einer nordischen Herrenschaft* ("Struggle for existence of a Nordic master caste"), already refers to the narrative type of a ruling caste that came to Greece from the North.⁸⁴ Thus, the main narrative is as clear as it is simple: Vacano described how the later Lacedaemonians, a branch or tribe of the Indo-European Dorians, came to Sparta, subjugated the helots, and built a kind of apartheid state based on a strict separation of rulers and slaves.⁸⁵ Schachermeyr's view was a more general one. He described the Indo-Germans' supposed fight for the Orient in antiquity, including a general chapter on the ongoing struggle among the races. Schachermeyr claimed that not only the western, but also the eastern branch of the Indo-European peoples, meaning the Indo-Aryans, had been dominated by the Nordic race, and the terms Indo-Germans and Northerners appear almost synonymous in his usage. Thus, he came up with the following sketch of their historical role:

work of Losemann (1977) and the articles in Näf (2001). Based on a disputable distinction between ideological and pure scholarly work, the chapter on the era of the 'Third Reich' in Karl Christ's book on German classicism is highly problematic (cf. Christ 2006, 58–94).

81 On Berve, with further references, see Rebenich (2001) and Günther (2002); on Schachermeyr, see Pesditschek (2009).

82 Berve (1935).

83 "Die Arier [...] sind es, welche den Gedanken des adligen Rittertums zu geschichtlichem Leben erwecken" (Schachermeyr 1944, 51–52).

84 Berve (1940). For more on the textbook and its content, see Roche (2012); on this kind of interpretation more generally, see Roche (2013, 2017).

85 See Berve (1936), 9–16.

Among all races, we are only concerned with the Nordic race. None of the other racial elements have ever been able to play any role in the European South-East or in the Near East on their own. Only the creative and exuberant power of the Northerners was never content within their homeland. Throughout history, this power drove ever new swarms to the South, resulting in the foundation of nations and states of northern-Indo-Germanic character in Greece, in the Balkans, in Asia-Minor and in Iran.⁸⁶

Conclusion and Aftermath

In contrast to its meaning in the ideological and political discourse of the time, historians and philologists of the early twentieth century used the term 'Aryan' predominantly to refer to the eastern branch of the Indo-Europeans (e.g., the so called Indo-Aryans). However, all scholars of the time wrote about the Indo-Germans (Indo-Europeans) and the Nordic Race. These were related, but not identical, concepts that could be charged with the same meaning and assume the same position or role in the historiographical narrative: Whether considered as a family of peoples defined by language, or as a race defined by racial affinities, the role of the Aryans as that of the invading aristocratic group or class appeared remarkably stable. Contrary to the traditional assumption that a fatal confusion of language and racial, philological and anthropological classifications paved the way for *völkisch* and Nazi racism, most scholars of race in the early twentieth century (including National Socialist scholars) rejected the concept precisely because of this confusion—what Nazi scholars did adhere to was the belief in a superior race of conquerors.⁸⁷ To point out that the narrative type of the invading (Aryan) race was long established in philological and historiographical writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is, of course, not to say that this was the only way in which the Aryans were presented at that time; there was no direct path leading to *völkisch* Aryanism. But it does help us to understand the ideological attractiveness and persistence of the Aryans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Last but not least, whereas after 1945 the Aryans—as well as the Nordic race—fell into discredit, due to the association of the term with Nazism, and disappeared from scholarly discourse as a result, the Aryan narrative type—i.e. that of heroic invaders and founders of civilizations—survived, and can

86 Schachermeyr (1944), 7.

87 See Hutton (2005), 96.

easily be identified in post-war historiographical writings, as well as in right-wing and Neo-Nazi accounts of history.⁸⁸ Only the fall of the paradigm of migrationism in classical and ancient studies in the 1960s—during the era of decolonization—led to the decline and fall of this narrative type, at least in the academic sphere.

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88 I shall refer only to the anthology *Aufstieg und Untergang der Großreiche des Altertums* ("Rise and Fall of Ancient Empires", 1958), a collection of short essays written (mostly) by former National Socialist historians and classicists. Clearly based on migrationism, the foundation of ancient empires is nearly always explained by invasions.

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Desired Bodies: Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia*, Aryan Masculinity and the Classical Body

Daniel Wildmann

Leni Riefenstahl is one of Nazi Germany's most famous film directors. She is particularly well known for her notorious propaganda films on behalf of the Nazi Party, and for her documentary on the Berlin Olympics in 1936. This chapter will look at the visual language of Riefenstahl's film *Olympia*—*The film of the 11th Olympic Games Berlin 1936*—a film still highly acclaimed today. It will analyze how Riefenstahl “staged” Aryan masculinity and conveyed anti-Semitism in the film—alongside a specific interpretation of the role of Greek mythology and Classical Greek statues.

The chapter offers a contextualized representation of the way in which the male “Aryan” body was presented as an ideal—and how this presentation circulated around an image that is invisible in the *Olympia* film, but which is nevertheless present in its absence: the image of the “Jewish body”. Which body was desired in the Third Reich, and which was not? How was the desired body constructed and staged?¹

My investigation uses the *Olympia* film as a source for the National Socialist self-image between 1936 and 1938, and considers the nature of this self-image as it was presented to the contemporary German public. The chapter shows how traits that are proclaimed to be Aryan are attributed visually to the body, and further—using a circular form of argumentative logic—how this “Aryanism” is justified, and its superiority exhibited visually. The film appeals to a collective memory on two, constantly interacting synchronic levels: an older one from a bourgeois iconographical canon—Classical antiquity—and a contemporary one that is established instantaneously. The prevailing conception of race at the time enabled the German public to connect both levels, and so link “Aryan” and “Jewish” bodies. In a bipolar constellation, the “Aryan” body in the foreground implied the existence of an opposite in the background: the “Jew”.² As the Third

1 This chapter is primarily based on material taken from my book, Wildmann (1998).

2 With regard to the Manichaean juxtaposition of “Aryan-Jewish”, see also Wiedemann's contribution in this volume.

Reich excluded the Jews from its community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), so too does Riefenstahl exclude the Jews from her film. The film extends the ritualized staging of the games of 1936 into the cinema, and presents the public with a “Jew-free” world. My analysis focuses on the prologue of her film, since the prologue sets up the political and visual framework of meaning for the film in its entirety. I will read Riefenstahl’s filmic language in relation to the Nazi regime’s contemporary policies toward Jews, and show that the *Olympia* film is, both in terms of its argument and its visual rhetoric, National Socialist.

Leni Riefenstahl’s “Olympia” film was officially commissioned by the Third Reich; its purpose, as the Organizing Committee of the Berlin Olympics explained in its official report, was

to be a document, and this document was meant to furnish an account of the first large-scale representative sports event in the new Germany ... It is possible that Berliners will have to wait a whole generation to experience the Olympic games again, but coming generations should still be able to enjoy and learn from the execution of the 1936 games.³

The Organizing Committee thus understood the games as a self-representation of the Third Reich; it envisioned the film as encapsulating and archiving this “representative sports event” of the “new Germany”—and serving as a paragon and cherished memory for later generations. In other words, it was meant to be something like an archive for National Socialism’s current image of itself. But what was a “sport event” in the “new Germany”, what did it represent, and what was the public supposed to “learn” from it? In considering the film as an historical source, I wish to explore what was being presented as doctrine and pleasure to the German public living its everyday life under the Nazis. Reflecting the dearth of material on contemporary reception of the film, I will not try to answer the question of whether the film’s viewers actually “learned” what they were supposed to.

In a cinema, the public responds to a film by means of its sociocultural biography. If a film is to be understood by its audience, it must address this biography. The language in which the communication between film and public becomes possible can be described using the theoretical concept of “collective memory”, which was developed by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s, but which only started making its way into a wide range of histor-

³ Organisationskomitee (1937), 329.

ical and literary-critical discussions in the late 1980s / early 1990s.⁴ The focus of this concept is not on memory's neuronal-physiological basis; instead, it postulates an incorporeal archive within the individual, formed by the societal conditions of the particular collective in which he lives: while memory itself is only "possessed" by the individual, it is still collectively stamped, playing its role in perception and action.⁵ For Amos Funkenstein, this form of memory is structured like a language, allowing itself to be defined as a

system of signs, symbols, and practices: anniversaries, named squares, monuments and triumphal arches, museums and texts, customs and manners, stereotypical ideas ... and even language itself.⁶

While the elements of this language-system are located outside the individual, the single subject is nonetheless born into them, and is then influenced and infused by them. At play here is a dynamic system that is neither archetypal in the Jungian sense nor biologically inherited, but which results from a societal process that is never finished. Rather, it is always newly negotiated.⁷

Race, Gender, and "Jews"

Among the three common categories used to distinguish the individual's social locus, "class", "gender", and "race", the latter category was obviously by far the most important within the Nazi *Weltanschauung*. An individual in the Third Reich was first of all "Aryan" or "non-Aryan"; that distinction was the first and most crucial step, marking to a large extent the difference between life and death, while the distinction between "male" and "female" was only of secondary importance. In this framework, I consider "gender" to be a category affected by "race" and subordinate to it.⁸ Nazi ideology is organized in bipolar terms, with good and bad strictly separated and engaged in a fatal struggle—my discussion will therefore focus on the good body, in relation to the body that is meant to be rejected. The male body is thus not defined in its relation to the female, but is

4 E.g. Assmann (1992) or Nora (1984–1992).

5 Assmann (1992), 35–37.

6 Funkenstein (1993), 6.

7 Yerushalmi (1982), 9–10.

8 For the impact of Nazi policy towards Jews on the daily life of German Jews and their understanding of gender roles, see for example Nicosia (2010).

rather considered as a positive, i.e. “Aryan” body, in relation to the “non-Aryan.” I will also address the question of the function of a body’s maleness in such a “race”-centered context.

Nevertheless, however central it is, “race” does not precisely define the *decisive* selective category of the Third Reich. This is because, first and foremost, Nazi politics was directed against Jews, and drew on anti-Semitic traditions forming a unique ideological complex—one basically different from the various forms of racism.⁹ Namely, in early twentieth-century Europe, racism *per se* did not base its reasoning on a set of political, theological, and economic images and judgments, according one distinct ethnic-religious group a profound and mysterious dominance needing to be broken. When I speak below of “race” and “racism,” I am thus addressing the framework of “Aryan”-centered anti-Jewish theory at the heart of the Nazi program. I will therefore place “Jew,” and “Jewish” in quotation marks when addressing the same anti-Semitic construct.

Regularly and extensively, the literature on Leni Riefenstahl has centered on her cinematic and photographic preoccupation with black bodies—for the most part not differentiating conceptually between her work on “Nubians” from the 1960s, and that on Jesse Owens in the *Olympia* film from 1936. The same literature, it seems, has failed to juxtapose black with *Jewish* bodies: an omission of the predominant Nazi enemy which I will try to remedy in my consideration of the approach taken by Nazi sports-scientists and the Nazi press to the Olympiad’s black athletes.¹⁰ Put succinctly: it was not “black” but “Jewish” bodies that comprised the counterpole to the “Aryan” body.

Desire

This essay will concentrate on exemplary male bodies, since male bodies are predominant in Riefenstahl’s film.¹¹ How can one analyze and explain the

9 See e.g. the seminal books by Saul (1987) and Volkov (2006).

10 There is frequent reference to a purported tension with Hitler on Riefenstahl’s part—the Führer allegedly having been thrown into a rage at the victories of black athletes. Riefenstahl thus emerges as an opponent of the regime, since she portrays the athletes who sparked the rage. cf. Infield (1976), 136–137 or Bach (2007), 179. What matters, of course, is not the fact that Riefenstahl filmed the athletes but how she did so—along with the neglected question of who she does not film. See further Wildmann (1998).

11 The dominance of male athletes in the film is a reflection of the dominance of male athletes at the Olympic Games itself. Olympic competitions for female athletes were only

potentially positive relationships of audiences in the Third Reich with the representations of these bodies?

Wolfgang F. Haug has argued that Arno Breker's male sculptures not only create fear but, in the ideals they articulate, they also mobilize and respond to desire; for Haug, then, those "Aryans" living under Nazism may have been ruled harshly—but they also, in the Olympic Committee's words, "enjoyed" National-Socialism.¹²

For Lacan, the concept of *the imaginary* emerged from a scene in an early, "mirror" phase of the subject's history. He assigns desired ideas of totality and power to the category of the imaginary; these ideas are themselves tied to the visual—to one's mirror image.¹³

In the present context, I do not wish to treat either desire or the imaginary as natural events—as anthropological constants. Rather, I understand them as historically defined and mutable constructs, through which independent ascriptions of meaning and modes of action can be represented and investigated. Interacting with the idea of collective memory, such historically-conceived concepts can help clarify the way in which individuals act of their own free will to satisfy wishes and needs which do not spring from a momentary situation, but are rather rooted in longer traditions.¹⁴

Anti-Semitism can be described as a complex language in which ideas and actions are bound up with one another; a language in which a society reaches an understanding concerning itself and its history, social consensus is generated, and affiliations distributed. However, in its inherent logic, anti-Semitism is not consistent; rather, it is highly paradoxical: its expressions are not always visible and graspable, and do not always refer to individual Jews—but always, however, to "the Jewish". This leads to the methodological difficulty that, in the reconstruction of such a language, evidence can often only be produced through a wider appraisal—that is, from a perspective that encompasses an ensemble of arguments. With the ideas informing this language understood as the material of a historically-determined "imaginary", then individual actions can be understood as transpositions and stagings of a desire gravitating around

established in significant numbers from the 1950s and 1960s onwards. In the Third Reich, the ascription of "Aryan" qualities is not, in principle, linked solely to the male body. Nazi ideology also ascribes "Aryan" qualities to the female body.

12 Haug (1987), 161–179.

13 Lacan (1991), 61–70; Widmer (1990), 28–37.

14 In 1936, Lacan attended the Berlin Olympics. Claus-Dieter Rath (1994, 16) thus poses the interesting but hardly answerable question of whether anything Lacan said or experienced there made its way into his theory.

an imaginary image: resting on anti-Semitic prejudices and images, the membership-regulations of a specific social group maintain and present it as “free of Jews”.

Riefenstahl has described her film as being intended as a “spur and symbol for youth to become even more beautiful and complete.”¹⁵ If the *Olympia* film was indeed meant to be such a model, then we might well ask if its bodies do not themselves represent such an “imaginary” and mobilize desire—the desire to resemble the model. And we might well also ask if the film’s German public was not in fact—in its cultural disposition—a “willing” public: a public that liked Riefenstahl’s images, and one which met Riefenstahl’s intentions with open eyes and ears.

We can view Riefenstahl’s bodies as the visual imaginary that responds to a desire and is itself desired. These bodies can show us how Nazism communicated, how it linked up to a collective memory and cultural code, and how it believed it could influence action. For this reason, I consider Riefenstahl’s bodies as “desired bodies” in the sense that they are bodies offered to a public which is meant to enjoy them and which will (perhaps) draw the right conclusions.

The Film

In August 1935, Hitler appoints Riefenstahl as the director of a film planned for the forthcoming Olympic Games.¹⁶ The film will be financed by the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* / RMVP) which, in cooperation with the distributor Tobis Filmkunst, will also be in charge of distribution. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) plays no part in either the production or the distribution of the film. The RMVP keeps quiet about its involvement and allows the Olympia-Film Gesellschaft (Olympia Film Production Company)—which is to act as the official producer of the film—to be set up as a cover; Leni Riefenstahl and her brother Heinz sign up as the partners of the company.¹⁷ After two-and-a-half years in production, the film has its premiere in Berlin as part of the Führer’s birthday celebrations on 20 April 1938. Guests at the party include leading personalities from the state, the party and the army sectors, the German and Austrian medallists (both male and female),

15 Riefenstahl (1938).

16 Cooper (1986), 19. In 1938, Leni Riefenstahl publicly stated that her appointment was due to the success of her films of Nazi Party rallies. Riefenstahl in Günther (c. 1938), 27.

17 Nowotny (1981), 47–49; Trimborn (2008), 133–134.

who all share the same nationality following the Austrian *Anschluss*, as well as members of the diplomatic corps.¹⁸ The film is extremely successful and is awarded several prizes, amongst them the Third Reich's National Film Prize in 1938, and a special award from the IOC, which is presented to Riefenstahl in 1948 at the first Olympic Games after the Second World War, held in London.¹⁹

After the collapse of the Third Reich, it takes until 1957 for the film to be shown again in Germany for the first time in public, though only in film clubs. In 1958, Riefenstahl cuts the pre-war version of the film in consultation with the *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Filmwirtschaft* (Voluntary Self-Censorship of the Film Industry / FSK), in order to be able to exploit the film commercially in West Germany. Whenever the "Olympia" film is nowadays publicly screened in Germany, whether on television or in the cinema, the version shown is always based on the cut from 1958.²⁰

Leni Riefenstahl divides her Olympia-Film into two parts with two distinct titles. Both follow a chronology that does not correspond to the actual sequence of the Olympic Games competitions. The two parts are called "Fest der Völker" (Festival of Nations) and "Fest der Schönheit" (Festival of Beauty).

Leni Riefenstahl starts "Festival of Nations" with a lengthy cinematic composition which forms a complete unit that is quite separate, dramaturgically and cinematically speaking, from the part depicting the various sporting contests. Hoffmann is right to call this first part a prologue, as it introduces the most important themes and suggests a particular way of "reading" the film.²¹ It is exactly this function that makes these first 24 minutes of the film interesting for us. Within the context of this prologue, I will analyze the sequences describing the genesis of the body, its cinematic birth, and its genealogy. How does Riefenstahl construct the exemplary "Aryan" body, and what kind of past, what kind of legacy, does she confer upon it?

18 Nowotny (1981), 52. Cooper mentions all the guests by name. Cooper (1986), 186–189.

19 Nowotny (1981), 207; Bernett (1973), 127. At Avery Brundage's request, the IOC awarded Riefenstahl an "Olympic Diploma" at its last session before the war, but it was presented to her only after the war. Other awards included the first prize of the Venice Film Festival in 1938, the Swedish "Polar Prize" in 1938 and the French "Grand Prix" in 1938 (Infield 1976, 149). In Nazi Germany, the film was also additionally awarded the distinctions of having "national-political merit", "artistic merit" and "public educational value". The RMVP was responsible for awarding these ratings, which were part of the National Socialist censorship system and, once awarded, bestowed considerable tax savings on the recipient. Albrecht (1969), 23–24; Lowry (1991), 10.

20 Trimborn (2008), 152.

21 Hoffmann (1993), 125.

The film starts in the ruins of the Acropolis, proceeds to the statues of antiquity, and finally the camera turns, in a dissolve, to a living athlete. This athlete presents the audience with performances in various types of athletic disciplines such as the discus and the javelin throw, as well as the shot put. Then a group of women perform gymnastics in a natural setting. Finally, the camera tracks the movement of the Olympic torch through Europe until it reaches the Olympic stadium in Berlin. Then Riefenstahl presents the viewers with various short, but significant elements of the long opening ceremony, such as the entrance into the Olympic stadium of the various athletes' delegations, the opening of the Games by Adolf Hitler, and the igniting of the Olympic flame. Finally, a choir singing the Olympic hymn by Richard Strauss closes the prologue.

Antiquity

Towards the start of her prologue, Riefenstahl follows a shot of the famous Greek statue of the Myron discus thrower with a shot of a living athlete. The athlete holds his body in the same position as the Greek sculpture; he is also photographed in the same dimensions and from the same camera-angle: total and from below. The two takes are linked through a dissolve. In this manner, the athlete appears to emerge from the Myron discobolus, continuing what the immobile statue suggests: he first throws the discus, then both the shot-put and the javelin. The athlete is played by the well-known decathlon-champion Erwin Huber.²²

In linking Huber to the discobolus, Riefenstahl constructs a bridge between Germany and antiquity on several simultaneous levels: her cinematic strategy is the dissolve, her iconographic strategy is the language of the body, and her action-oriented strategy is the throwing of objects. Three connecting lines can also be distinguished on the iconographic level: the shared posture, nakedness, and muscular plasticity. In their primary goal of resemblance, all these techniques point above all toward Olympia, the body being that of an athlete, the sculpture that of a discus-thrower; Erwin Huber truly springs, as it were, from the sculpture.²³

22 Downing (1992), 52; Cooper (1986), 141–142. Both authors describe how Huber's body-position was carefully aligned with that of the discobolus through the use of film tricks.

23 In her choice of cinematic means to link antiquity with the present, Riefenstahl has recourse to familiar models. The dissolve from the discobolus to Huber stands in the

Riefenstahl places the discobolus in an illuminating series: it is the last in a sequence of Greek statues representing divinities, mythic figures, and historical individuals. They have illustrious names: Alexander the Great, Ares, Aphrodite, Apollo.²⁴ Riefenstahl also links these plastic images through dissolves; their unity is thus also a genealogical sequence culminating in Huber himself. Wolbert has defined the strategy of iconographic reference to antiquity here appropriated by Riefenstahl as central to Nazi sculpture; he sees it as an ennobling strategy—a way of endowing such sculpture with a certain dignity. As Wolbert puts it, the “openly demonstrated relation or actual identity with the Olympic gods” is meant to “essentially remove” the official state sculpture of the Third Reich from its earthly basis.²⁵ Correspondingly, in his “demonstrable” similarity with his cinematic predecessors, Huber is himself “removed from the earthly”. At the same time, in the first such instance in the film, martial and athletic accomplishments are blended without contradiction in a single body—that of Huber.

Precisely through its length, the strikingly long dissolving process announces itself as such. This announcement has a special meaning. It is useful here to recollect Silke Wenk’s description of the visual and ideological connections between various female bodies commissioned by the Third Reich for photo-reproduction on postcards and in newspapers. The images involved both Nazi sculpture oriented toward antiquity and contemporary photographic nudes. Frequently, the two sorts of naked body were brought together in a single image.²⁶

Wenk describes the relation of nude to sculpture as a *mimetic* relation: the fleshly body wishes to be like the stone body, and acts accordingly. In the “Olympia” film, Huber’s body has a similarly mimetic relation to the discobolus—demonstrating this is the main purpose of the prominent fading. A mimesis presumes a difference that needs to be overcome—the film’s form thus demonstrating the difference between living body and Greek statue and—

tradition of “living pictures”; cf. Wenk (1991), 233. Nicholas Kaufman’s sports promotion film *Paths to Strength and Beauty* (*Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit*) also made use of such “living pictures”. His film, produced in 1925, was one of the most popular “culture films” (*Kulturfilme*) of the Weimar Republic.

24 Both in the 1937 German edition of the photo-volume for the “Olympia” film and in the 1994 American reprint, a reproduced statue from the prologue is designated as Achilles. But the sculpture is actually a representation of the war-god Ares (cf. communication with Adrian Stähli). See Riefenstahl (1937), 24; Riefenstahl (1994), 24.

25 Wolbert (1982), 58.

26 Wenk (1991), 226–235.

at the same time—an overcoming of that difference. One body is synchronized with the other; Huber links his activity to a model that he imitates and that, in one and the same movement, imitates him.

At the take's beginning, Huber's posture is stiff, as if he were a statue; he is offering himself in a pose. As he starts to move, he continues to display his body in open positions—neither his hands nor his arms cover other body-parts. He presents himself as a body which is meant to be looked at. The slow motion lengthens and intensifies the act of seeing. It shows that the body is showing itself. In this manner, not only the body, but also its presentation, take on a positive value. Wenk interprets the open pose as a “gesture”, inviting observation, and linked to the expectation of constituting itself through the gaze of the other.²⁷ This gaze does not directly turn to the photographed nude, but runs in a loop that encounters the sculptures. These offer, as it were, the official standard upon which the models orient themselves. The desire of the model—to incorporate the perfect body—and that of an observing public—to become the perfect body—are meant to meet here.²⁸ As with the photographs, the film also relies on the individual's potential desire for model bodies, as well as on the desire to mirror oneself in these bodies as part of a larger community; that of the *Volk*. The ideal forms are not only supposed to prompt submission but also identification. The orientation around this corporeal ideal is linked with the promised dissolution of a difference, since—in contrast with the ideal—one's own body is characterized as flawed.²⁹

For Wenk, such dissolution is grounded in the fact that the female nude model has herself staged in an open pose—a pose that is classical within the understanding of art prevalent in the Third Reich—the model is thus forming her body after the stone precedent.³⁰ In the film, this process is rendered into visible movement. In the dissolves, mimesis and pose collapse into each other and achieve a resolution; it promises the public an overcoming of one's own corporeal flaws through the imaginary gaze of another upon one's own naked-mimetic body.³¹ To be sure, for the athletically-staged nude, posing is no longer sufficient: we now have, in addition, the demand for bodily training. In other

27 Wenk (1991), 229–231. For Wenk, the pose “showing itself as a pose” occupies the realm of photography and sculpture. I am here transferring the interpretation of posing as “the showing of showing” to the lengthening effect of cinematic slow motion.

28 Wenk (1991), 229.

29 Wenk (1991), 227, 229.

30 Wenk (1991), 232.

31 Wenk (1991), 229–230.

words, the promise's resolution is not guaranteed by the gaze of the other alone; one's own physical work on one's own body is now also needed.

Eternal-Vital Nudity

In Nazi sculpture, nakedness attests to the body's elite status. This follows the traditional role assigned to nude sculpture in the nineteenth century—especially as applied to industrial imitations of classical antiquity. Gracing the fronts of factories and ministries, nude sculptures would thus point to a product or to a service offered by the state. Nakedness became a seal and metaphor of the highest quality, being considered, beyond this, as a sensuous manifestation of beauty, hence of the eternal.³² In the end, Nazi art historians simply equated antique sculpture with nude sculpture.³³ In invoking antique statues and placing Huber naked before the camera, Riefenstahl ties her work to this tradition. At this moment, she is also addressing the meaning of eternity—a gesture taking place on two levels: on that of the corporeal via naked bodies, whether living or antique; and on that of the metaphysical via the staged sculptural genealogy, encompassing the gods. As the film proceeds, the recourse to eternity becomes ever-more important; it is eventually sundered from antiquity and linked to the *Volkskörper*—the national-ethnic body.

Such an approach is, of course, only possible because antique Greek art is itself considered exemplary and “noble”. Nazism here relies on ideological elements of German bourgeois culture emerging in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the Greeks passing as “Aryan”, one striking facet of this reliance is, it would seem, Nazism's strategy of self-ennoblement.³⁴

Klaus Theweleit describes the corporeality of the men he examines as that of “armored bodies”. In order to preserve their wholeness and intactness, they draw boundaries between themselves and their surroundings.³⁵ Riefenstahl's staging of the naked athlete also endows his body with the power to draw boundaries, likewise. Both the use of light and the presence of full, firm muscles furnish him with a hard, armor-like shield. In her concern with preserving Huber's intactness, Riefenstahl extends the scope of nineteenth-century

32 Wolbert (1982), 142–147, 196–200; Sünderhauf (2004), 295–334.

33 Gunnar Brands (1990), 112, 128.

34 See the seminal books by Esther Sophia Sünderhauf (2004), Helen Roche (2013) and Klaus Wolbert (1982); also the contributions by Pomeroy and Whyte in this volume.

35 Theweleit (1989), 221–223.

recourses to antiquity, with their focus on the male body as both an ideal and a defensive entity.³⁶

The laboring muscles and the forward, space-encompassing movement of the body mark the athlete with expansive vitality; the movement is, as it were, rendered into flesh, and biologized. Where, at the film's beginning, the Greek statues were immobile, from the dissolve onward, a body has become mobile, its pressing forward emerging out of the Greek figure. The forward movement thus simultaneously appears as a sudden departure from the Olympic idea encapsulated in the Greek statue, and also as a further development and realization of it—the difference being that the naked body's movement will end in Riefenstahl's "Third Reich" setting. Or, as she put it in a 1938 interview, "in the prologue ... the ideal of the classical figures is superseded by the living materialization of today's fighter."³⁷

Riefenstahl hence does not only bring the living body together with classical antiquity and Olympia, but also with "today": cinematically, the movement of both camera and body forms a continuum between the discus-throw and a modern, non-antique discipline from track and field, the shot-put. And the man playing the athlete, the model-body and "living materialization of the fighter", is a German, Erwin Huber: the "best European in the Olympic decathlon", as Riefenstahl will name him later in the film. As a mimetic act, the equation of antiquity with Germany and Germany with antiquity passes across his body. Olympia extends to "today", to the shot-put, and "today" is German. And, since the Nuremberg laws of 1935, being German meant being "Aryan", because only "Aryans" possessed the legal status of *Reichsbürger*, "Citizens of the Reich".

Healing Purification

Around the *fin-de-siècle*, ideas emerged in Germany linking the naked body with processes of healing. The social locus of such ideas was the "life-reform" and youth movement. Within this locus, it was followers of the FKK (*Freikörperkultur*) who devoted themselves most ardently to realizing such ideas.³⁸

36 In this respect as well, her role in National Socialism and the 1936 Olympics is not unique. See the seminal books by Thomas Alkemeyer (1996), Reinhard Rürup (1996) and Ralf Schäfer (2011).

37 Riefenstahl, in Hoffmann (1993), 143.

38 König (1990), 144–145. The dance-movement around Isadora Duncan and Mary Wigman—Leni Riefenstahl's dance-teacher—also had its "life reform" context; it, too, was

They considered the surrounding reality as threatening—something attacking the body and making it sick. The sickness' sources were familiar enemies for all early twentieth-century anti-modernists: the city, industry, "positive" analytic intellect, bureaucracy—and the "Jews".³⁹ In contrast, nakedness was seen as linking the body with nature, thus strengthening its crumbling constitution and restoring its health. The "life-reformers" based their ideas on somewhat older natural-health movements that also saw nakedness as a form of therapy, and promised successful medically-grounded cures through healthy air and healing waters. As Wolbert writes, the naked body thus gained the status of a "cultic-mystified symbol of salvation".⁴⁰

Surrounded by nature, naked men and women were depicted in photos and pictures linked to "life-reform" circles.⁴¹ Meadows, trees, and rivers were meant to free this nakedness from suspicions of a sexuality that was itself considered degenerate. The naked bodies were desexualized and nakedness elevated to a metaphor of purity; health and purity were made into correlatives.⁴² Important publicists for the nudist movement such as Heinrich Pudor, Hans Surén, and Richard Ungewitter combined "life-reform" and *Volk*-oriented, anti-Semitic ideas. In doing so, they tied purity to "race": not healing the individual body, but rather that of the *Volkskörper*, now became central. It was Surén who then linked nakedness firmly to sport—particularly to the athletic disciplines of track and field.⁴³

Conceptualizing what is healthy is firmly bound up with, and dependent on, conceptualizing what is unhealthy.⁴⁴ Although the source of the illness is

deeply concerned not only with bodies but also with nakedness. Many of the dance movement's protagonists themselves had no problem continuing their careers after 1933; Mary Wigman actually ended up producing the Olympiad's opening spectacle, using leading dancers, choreographers, and composers from the reform movement such as Werner Egk, Carl Orff, Harald Kreuzberg, and Gret Palucca.

39 Mosse (1987), 63–70; Gilman (1992), 190–191; Möhring (2004), 169–257.

40 Wolbert (1982), 167–178; Hau (2003), 32–81.

41 The prime filmic example of this was "Paths to Strength and Beauty".

42 Mosse (1987), 64–68.

43 König (1990), 147–153; Mosse (1987), 69–71. See also Möhring (2004), 169–257; Wedemeyer-Kolwe (2004), 290–422.

44 Using German literary sources, Thomas Koebner describes how "German" and "Jewish" were regularly and continuously linked with "healthy" and "sick" in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany. In such texts, "Germans" and "Jews" clash with each other in fateful fashion; conflicts emerge that would have to end in death. It is ultimately the Germans who are the victims, since they have no other option than defending and "freeing" themselves from "disease". See Koebner (1992), 107–116.

not shown in Riefenstahl's "Olympia" film, it is present despite its absence. It is underscored in the film in silent fashion.⁴⁵ In the contemporary ideological context, Germany is the patient and the "Jew" the "bacillus". From this vantage point, we can approach the naked athlete as an answer to and defense against a sick and infectious "Jewish" modernism. The decathlon champion is not *merely* healthy, but also doubly pure: as a film figure, he has a clear-cut and positive origin: Hellenic. In the official PR-campaign of articles and exhibits used by the Third Reich to promote the Berlin Olympics, the Greeks were made into "Aryans".⁴⁶ In the end, Huber is playing an "Aryan", but also, in his private life as Erwin Huber, he is a German "citizen of the Reich", i.e. an "Aryan". Embodied in Huber, the combination of "life-reform", nationalism, anti-Semitism, and bourgeois aesthetic evocation of the antique runs through the prologue—and a few film-minutes later the running athlete has his visual continuation in torchbearers sprinting from Greece to Germany. Here, the medicine reaches, as it were, the patient's sickbed.⁴⁷

In this way, the naked and noble body does not remain in antiquity, but transforms itself into a remedy and rushes into the present. In the long dissolve sequence, the discus thrower and decathlon champion are carefully molded to each other. But Huber's body does not belong to the past; rather, it is a body for the future, a utopia that promises healing. Right at the start of her film, Leni Riefenstahl thus sets up a strong sign and a standard: its first living person is a male German athlete; he is "Aryan", and ennobled through his origins, resembling a god.

Torchbearers

The Olympic torch relay, which is famous today, and has been a standard feature of the Olympic Games for many years, dates back only to 1936, and was first carried out at the Olympic Games in Berlin. The torch relay to the Olympic

45 Koebner (1992, 17) names this a "procedure of speaking of one thing and simultaneously thinking another".

46 More specifically: Greeks were conceived as "Dorians" stemming, as an "Aryan-Indo-European tribe", from the Baltic region. cf. Brands (1990), 114–115; Möhring (2004), 226–257; Roche (2013), 203–237. See also the contributions by Roche and Whyte in this volume.

47 In 1936, the Third Reich saw itself as on the road to fundamental improvement. The "sick" condition ascribed to the Weimar Republic had been partially conquered. But Nazi officials still did not describe their land as completely healthy.

fire consists of three parts: The lighting of the torch in Olympia, the conveyance of the torch by a relay of runners from Olympia to the place of the games, and the lighting of the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony by the final relay runner. This last part, the lighting of the fire at the opening ceremony, dates back somewhat further. It was first performed in 1928 at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam. The invention of the torch relay was claimed by the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda under Joseph Goebbels, as well as by Carl Diem, General Secretary of the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936.⁴⁸

On visual grounds, Riefenstahl was not content with the official ceremony,⁴⁹ staging it anew for her film: it is evening, and three naked women stand at the sea's edge, one behind the other. In the background, the sun is still shining. With eyes closed, they move their arms up and down. At the lower edge of the picture, a blazing flame fades in. It grows and grows, until it entirely embraces and covers the women. Finally, the three nudes fade out; they are quasi-burnt. In their place a youth fades in. He stands before a stump of a Greek column, holding a torch in his hand that seems to be ignited by the blazing flames. Slowly, the flames fade out. The torchbearer's muscles are precisely illuminated, the ribs clearly visible, the face angular, the hair wildly tangled. Riefenstahl describes the youth's body-type and physiognomy as "classical Greek".⁵⁰ He opens his eyes and turns on his own axis. At the same time, he gazes upward, extending the torch toward the heavens. Like the German decathlon champion, the Greek is muscular and virtually naked, wearing only a brief loin-cloth. But instead of a piece of sporting equipment, he holds a lit torch in his hand. Riefenstahl lays out the process of fading and rotation in a striking slow-motion sequence, accompanying it with a musical fanfare.⁵¹ She evidently attributes great importance to it.

The flames signify the end of a sequence linked to Huber's appearance, showing naked women who exercise under the open sky until they burn up. The sequence starts with images of body-parts, arms, and legs, then follows several intact bodies. The gymnastics take place in front of corn-fields and on cliffs

48 Bernett (1986), 385–386.

49 Riefenstahl (1990), 262–263; Downing (1992), 53–54.

50 "Only the fourth runner in this relay looked as I had imagined him: a young dark-haired Greek." It seems not to have bothered her that "my classical Greek youth" was actually no Greek, but rather a Russian emigrant named Anatol Dobriansky. Riefenstahl (1990, vol. 1), 263.

51 In line with the fanfares traditionally assigned to the role, Hitler's arrival in the Olympia stadium was announced with the "Olympia-Fanfare"; cf. Bernett (1986), 373.

along the coast; the women's arms mainly extend towards the sky. They remind us of priestesses serving and rendering tribute both to nature and the sun.

Starting with the sacral nature of the women's posture and movements, and continuing to the fire's movement, safeguarded by priestesses, from sun to torchbearers, this scene addresses the most important elements of the Olympic ceremony. But Riefenstahl does make changes, mixing these Olympian elements with others: whereas in the original ceremony the women's robes and hair are "ancient Greek" in style, the women in the film are naked; and they appear to die.

Like a phoenix from the ashes, a single bright and gleaming male body rises from the flame and from the group of three female bodies: here, a Greek youth is being born cinematically. His eyes open: awake, he begins his torch-run. Crucially, within National Socialism's symbolic language, torch and light visually realize rebirth and awakening: as both process and movement, each marks a historical caesura—along with progress, and a dynamic advance into the new epoch.⁵² The flame burns against a black background. The Greek emerges from that darkness, hurrying forward, looking straight ahead, into a bright Greek landscape. Again: metaphorically encapsulating the concepts of new departure, rebirth and awakening, the shift from dark to light represented an ubiquitous Nazi topos—one which Riefenstahl's German audience could not fail to recognize.⁵³

Let us continue our review of Riefenstahl's topoi: The Greek is born from bodies serving the sun. The "National Socialist idea" was frequently apostrophized as sun or light, the swastika itself representing a sun-symbol.⁵⁴ In such a light, the attending women serve as unmistakable stand-ins for the "Aryan *Volkskörper*"—since, according to Nazi self-understanding, as a "pure race", they had no forebears but themselves. This role in turn forms the framework for some additional, interconnected, observations: The female bodies are presented as flat, without distinctly contoured body-surfaces; the male body is bright, gleaming, muscular, armor-like. As in the final image, the naked female bodies only form a complete body as an *ensemble*. These gymnasts move exclusively in one location, the camera assimilating the fixed point, and omitting traveling shots. Their rare movements are limited to individual pan-shots. The fixed locus, the soft female bodies, their fragmentation, ornamental character, and disappearance, all render them subordinate to the space-traversing ath-

52 Thöne (1979), 16–19, 23–26.

53 Thöne (1979), 16–19.

54 Thöne (1979), 40–42.

lete; as priestesses, the women are not divine like the man—rather, as might be expected within the Nazi conceptual schema, they are a complementary supplement to the Aryan athlete.⁵⁵

Riefenstahl twice generates model men through her use of dissolves; in a sense they are born cinematically, first seeing the light of day as mature beings. On the second occasion, Riefenstahl replaces antique sculptures with living women. But on both occasions, the same utopian body emerges—first as a German athlete, then as a Greek torchbearer. And each of the two men functions as an “Aryan”. Whereas the decathlon champion is located in mythic time, the torchbearer very concretely reaches his real homeland: the newly-built Olympia stadium in Berlin.

The Greek runner sallies forth straight after his birth, eventually passing the torch on, in a colonnade. The torchbearers do their running in brief, skin-toned loincloths; their upper bodies are muscle-bound. Aside from the time of the torch-delivery, they never stand still, and thanks to the torches they are also clearly recognizable even when they appear as small figures on screen. The men carry the torch through Greek ruins and coastal breakers, into the Greek cities. With urban proximity, the modesty of their apparel increases: black gymnastic shorts replace the loincloth. The film finally shifts from running men to relief-maps furnished with the names of the countries being traversed by the torch-team. Taking over the forward surge of the runners, the camera now flies over the maps, itself thus becoming a torchbearer. Aerial photographs of Germany now appear. In contrast to the previous relief maps, these are images of a real landscape. In sequence, the film now presents the stadium and parts of the opening ceremony. At the prologue's end, we are offered additional torchbearers, the last of whom will light the Olympic Flame in the Olympia Stadium.

Naked or clothed, the upright, forward-moving torchbearer was itself a widespread figure in the Third Reich's visual rhetoric—above all in the realm of sculpture. The sculptor Arno Breker formulated the figure programmatically on behalf of the Nazi state, using Prometheus as his model. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had defined the “Aryan” as the “Prometheus of humanity”, and as the sole bearer of culture and progress.⁵⁶ Within National Socialist culture, the torchbearer was thus interpreted as an embodiment of will and spirit—as a super-human

55 For the “Aryan” woman's place within Nazism and its mirroring in films from the Third Reich, see for example books by Jo Fox (2000), Antje Ascheid (2003) and Jana Francesca Bruns (2009).

56 Hitler (1934), 317.

entity itself molding history without scruple. One of Breker's most important torchbearers stood in the inner court of the Reich Chancellery and was named "The Party."⁵⁷ With the same resolve shown by the torchbearers in their run through cinematic reality, the Nazi Party resolutely moved through Germany's reality in order to form it totally anew.

A number of themes and elements come together in the figure of the relay runner. On a narrative and visual level, he is a *connective body*: he connects Greece as geographical locus and mythic antique landscape with Germany as geographical locus and the home of National Socialism. On their journey from the past to the present, the runners change. They wear gym-shorts as soon as they approach the first cities, and their classical curly locks turn into rigidly parted hair in the German fashion of the time. The classical Greek transforms into a "proper" German. Virtually all the takes are linked with cross-fades. These blur the borders between Olympia and Berlin, stressing continuities and constructing analogies. Thus, the Third Reich emerges as a natural and legitimate heir to and successor of a way of life, the origin of which Riefenstahl tries to place in antiquity, but whose present and future is in Berlin.

But Riefenstahl's Germany is not only the heir to, but also an even more developed extension of, the antique Olympian tradition: the broad Greek pillar-stump of the ancient ruins turn into a new Olympic stadium, and the stone sculpture is transformed into a living athlete. The prologue enacts a straight linear movement postulating historical progress and renewal, and describing its terms and direction.

In the synthesis of their various expressions—athlete, Greek torchbearer, German final runner—these figures are simultaneously the embodiment, basis, and legitimation for the forward movement, for progress itself, for resolute departure, and for the claim to German leadership. The prologue is thus a cinematic representation of Nazi sports-ideology and art-ideology, as reformulated in the context of the Olympic Games.

In 1936 Werner March, the architect of the Olympic site in Berlin, described his intentions as follows:

Adjacent to the track for the contests, the *stadion*, we find the May Field as *forum*, with the Langemarck Hall as *temple*, the open-air stage as *theatron*, the Reichsakademie as *gymnasium*, the House of German Sport

57 Wolbert (1982), 212–222.

as *prytaneion*, and the Center of Public Recreation as *palaistra*. And even the holy olive-tree at the entrance to the temple of Olympian Zeus, from the branches of which a youth cuts the victory-wreath with a golden knife, has found its equivalent in the German oak greeting those entering the Olympic Gate today.

In Riefenstahl's prologue, an idealized male body leads Olympia to Germany, and Germany to its meaning within history—history as imagined by Nazi ideology; if this male body is “Aryan”, so is its history, and vice versa.

Renewal and Salvation

In her imagery, Riefenstahl realizes cinematically what the Third Reich was attempting to enact for its citizens through the Olympic Games: the sacralization of Nazi ideology. Within her own specialized realm, she speaks the same language as Diem, March, Breker, and other architects of Germany's public prominence in the 1936 Olympics. Like these figures, Riefenstahl gives new significance to the German bourgeois reception of antiquity, transforming the relevant metaphors and symbols into a National Socialist guise.⁵⁸ But the old meaning can still be discerned—in fact, it has to be, since it can only be read by the audience in this fashion. In a manner evoking Barthes' ideas about myth-formation,⁵⁹ Riefenstahl's metaphors thus oscillate between two planes of meaning, with two processes unfolding: firstly reference, then Nazi transformation. In this manner, Riefenstahl presents a cosmological-cum-sacral National Socialist cinematic construct, its thematic ingredients being self-sacrifice, renewal, and ultimately salvation.⁶⁰

As an echo, the prologue opens spaces for the nurturing of fantasy and desire. The oscillatory nature of its elements is an advantage, since it increases the possibility for the nurturing of variants of the fantasies and desires thus

58 Riefenstahl's care in choosing her colleagues and advisors is especially apparent in this realm: her chief advisor on antiquity was Walter Hege, who in Germany was considered one of the most important specialists in the photographing and filming of antique archaeological discoveries. A new form of photography, influenced by Hege, emerged in German archaeology of the 1930s; it is manifest in Riefenstahl's prologue, as well as in the takes of the Acropolis and statues. I owe this information to a personal communication from Adrian Stähli. cf. Beckmann and Dewitz (1993).

59 Barthes (1974), 92–106.

60 Cf. Vondung (1971), 184–186; Schnell (1978), 45–46; Friedländer (1987), 73–112.

aroused. The imagined national character can be inscribed on the desired male body—as can its ugly, dark, repellent imaginary antithesis be inscribed upon another, absent, counter-body. The interplay of sculpture and film in the representation of naked bodies produces a phantasmagorical realm that coordinates individual desire, positioning it towards an object, and rendering it into a “mimetic desire”: it is not only the body itself that is desired, but also the idea of having the same body as that which is desired.⁶¹ This is the space within which the Nazi mythic-genealogical narrative circulates, self-generating and self-referential, repeatedly presented for its own sake alone. Everything “non-Aryan” is excluded from it *a priori*.⁶²

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61 On the Lacanian notion of *fantasma* see Erdle (1996), 156.

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Ancient Historians and Fascism: How to React Intellectually to Totalitarianism (or Not)

Dino Piován

Ancient History and Italian Fascism

The twenty years of Italian history dominated by Fascism (1922–1943) were an age of heavy interference in historiography, and especially of detrimental cultural autarchy. As Arnaldo Momigliano stated many years later, “oxygen was missing. Cultural contacts [...] were very difficult”.¹ Fascism gave a favored place to Roman history. It presented itself as the heir of ancient Rome, of its civilization, its state and its empire. The cult of Rome was not only “the better slogan to spread the concepts of attack and imperialism,”² but also formed a constitutive part of Fascist ideology.³ It therefore became the vehicle for many scholarly endeavors, including the foundation of journals such as *Historia* (edited by Ettore Pais, professor of Roman history at the university of Rome); of research centers such as the Institute of Roman Studies; of celebrations such as the two thousandth anniversaries of Virgil (1930), Horace (1935) and Augustus (1937), and spawned a huge number of publications such as the *Quaderni augustei* or the *Quaderni dell'impero*. Their purpose was “to highlight continuity: Between ancient Rome and the Catholic Church, ancient Rome and Italian history, ancient Rome and Fascism”.⁴ A common theme in ancient historical studies during this period was the similarity between Fascism and Caesar's dic-

1 Momigliano (1975e), 197.

2 Momigliano (1986), 131.

3 There is in fact some controversy on the subject of whether the so-called *romanità* of Fascism was just a slogan or a fundamental part of its ideology. Zunino (1985, 70–74) well represents the argument that *romanità* was essentially about magniloquent rhetoric; for an opposing point of view see Giardina (2000), who stresses the multiple functions and manipulations of Roman myth; also Belardelli (2005) and Tarquini (2011). The most recent bibliography on the myth of “Romanness” can be found in Nelis' chapter in this volume and Nelis (2013), 263 n. 19 (incidentally, Nelis, following Emilio Gentile's interpretation of Fascism as a political religion, investigates how Fascism appropriated some aspects of the heritage of Roman antiquity in a modernist fashion) and Polverini (2016), 10 n. 3, 19 n. 46, 21 n. 56.

4 Canfora (1980), 85.

tatorship or Augustus' government; take, for example, the notorious definition of Caesar as "the first Blackshirt in the history of the nation".⁵ Another recurrent topos was the debate about the originality of Roman as opposed to Greek culture. This was part of a more general tendency towards reinstatement of the so-called *Primato italiano* ("Italian leadership"), a national myth elaborated by some intellectuals of the nineteenth century such as Vincenzo Gioberti and Giuseppe Mazzini, which was taken up once more in the 1920s, particularly by the philosopher Giovanni Gentile, one of Fascism's most influential intellectuals (he was also Minister of Education in the first Mussolini cabinet, 1922–1924). To be sure, the question of Roman originality, so important in European classical scholarship of the nineteenth century, was outdated in the first half of the twentieth; however, it inspired a meticulous search for the basic traits of the so-called Italian "genius". It was very typical "to oppose Greece and Rome, depreciate the former compared to the latter, [...] to devalue democracy (considered a negative value of the Greek world)".⁶ In short, ancient history as a discipline institutionalized divisions between Roman and Greek history, the former infested by rhetoric and propaganda, the latter depressed and marginalized with regard to the appointment of university chairs.

It was in this context that the debate about the freedom of ancient Greece arose. It had its origins in the school of Gaetano De Sanctis, the greatest Italian ancient historian of that period, and one of the very few university professors who refused to take the oath of loyalty to Fascism in 1931.⁷ The protagonists of this discussion were De Sanctis himself and some of his students: Aldo Ferrabino, professor at the university of Padua, Arnaldo Momigliano, and Piero Treves. These last two were very young (they were born in 1908 and 1911 respectively) but were already able to assert themselves, not only due to their technical knowledge, but also because of their critical reconsideration of essential problems. This debate was much more than a mere controversy among specialists in the ancient world, because of the influence exercised by the thought and works of Benedetto Croce, the philosopher who was considered the cultural leader of anti-Fascism around 1930, and who kept elaborating his conception of history as the history of freedom in important theoretical and historiographical works.⁸ This was therefore a debate in which many different perspectives

5 This phrase was coined by Emilio Bodrero, a classicist who took on important offices under Fascism; for the entire quotation see Franco (1993), 118.

6 Canfora (1980), 82.

7 On De Sanctis' rejection of the Fascist oath, see the historian's own recollections in De Sanctis (1970, 143–157); also Goetz (1982, 2000).

8 Croce's principal theoretical works on history are Croce (1989), Croce (1931) and Croce (1966),

intersected: philological analysis, theory and philosophy of history, ideology and politics. Arguably, this was the first time that Greek history had been the field of so severe a confrontation over the values of political freedom and liberty of thought in Italian culture.

The Tormented Search for the Meaning of Greek History: De Sanctis

When Fascism came to power, De Sanctis was the most eminent representative of ancient historical studies in Italy.⁹ He had been a student of Julius Beloch, the German scholar who had been called after 1870 to teach at Rome by the new Italian state. As late as 1870, the Kingdom of Italy had annexed the State of the Church and proclaimed Rome as its capital; it wanted to renovate the Roman university and open Italian research up to new European science. In fact, Beloch introduced the modern study of Greek history to Italy; he united the traditional, philological quest for sources with substantial use of new disciplines such as economy, statistics and demography.¹⁰ He tended to modernize ancient economy and politics, and postulated “national unity as the ‘natural’ purpose for the history of ancient nations”;¹¹ he followed the German tradition of *Staatsgeschichte*, and preferred a strong state. That is why he exalted Philip II of Macedon, considered as the man who united ancient Greece, and compared him to the Prussian Hohenzollerns¹² (a comparison which, incidentally, did not appeal at all to Croce).¹³

while the most relevant historiographical works are Croce (1928), Croce (1930) and Croce (1991).

9 Many students of De Sanctis wrote about him in later years: Accame (1957); Accame (1971); Ferrabino (1958); Momigliano (1960); Momigliano (1975e); Treves (1970); Treves (1991); for a well-balanced judgment from someone not of his school see Gabba (1971). More recent studies include Polverini (2011), Amico (2007), a biography which also publishes the speeches De Sanctis delivered as “senatore a vita” (senator for life) after World War II, and Santangelo (2013) which is the first analysis of De Sanctis’ prose style.

10 For a good profile of Beloch, see Momigliano (1966d).

11 Momigliano (1955d), 284.

12 As Roberts (1994, 293) has observed, “Admiration for imperial monarchies fostered in many German thinkers a respect for Philip that often worked to undermine any incipient enthusiasm for Athenian democracy”. On the anti-Athenian tradition in German classical scholarship see also Piovan (2008), 313–316.

13 Croce (1930), II 247.

De Sanctis accepted basic methodological principles from Beloch, such as the search for sources and the unitarian premise; however, these were filtered by his own personality, which was pervaded by Catholic spirituality and loyalty to liberalism; therefore he was extremely critical of ancient and modern imperialism, even if he was prepared to accept some forms of “positive” colonialism.¹⁴ What De Sanctis did not adopt from Beloch was his materialism and contempt for individuals; hence, he preferred political and institutional history to social and economic history, gave a large amount of consideration to moral energies, and interlaced reconstruction of the past with meditation on the present. He was naturally open to Croce's lesson that true history is always contemporary,¹⁵ and during Fascism he had many intellectual and personal contacts with Croce, even if he can never be called one of his disciples.¹⁶

De Sanctis' ideological education was quite unusual. His family consisted of former public officials of the State of the Church, who rejected Italian unification in 1870 and did not want to serve the new Italian state; it was an important turning-point in his life when he understood the historical necessity of Italian unity and decided to support Italy's colonial policies. However, there was no Catholic party in Italy during this period (1870–1919) because of the conflict between State and Church and the *non expedit*, the Pope's prohibition from participating in political life; it was only after 1919 and the foundation of the Popular Party by Don Sturzo that things changed. Then, De Sanctis established the Cultural Catholic Association in Turin in 1920 in order to spread Catholic thought, and presented himself (unsuccessfully) as a candidate for political elections.¹⁷ Later, he opposed Fascism even more publicly: he signed the “Manifesto of anti-Fascist intellectuals”, advanced by Croce in 1925, and later refused the oath of allegiance in 1931, even though the Pope had also

14 For a broader analysis of these aspects see Bandelli (1980) and Bandelli (1981).

15 The famous maxim that “every true history is contemporary history” can be found in Croce (1989), 14. However, it is worth noting that even before Croce had published his major works on history, De Sanctis wrote that “history has been called the teacher of life: It is more modest but more exact to say that the former is the disciple of the latter”, De Sanctis (1904), 209. On the significance of this sentence in his entire historiographical oeuvre see Polverini (2011), 399.

16 On the difference between Croce's and De Sanctis' conception of history and historiography see Accame (1957), who was De Sanctis' student, and represents a Catholic point of view; for Croce's view, see Croce (1930), II 245–247; Dionisotti (1989, 27–64) reconstructs some moments in their complicated intellectual relationship.

17 On these aspects see Accame (1975); a synthesis can be found in D'Orsi (2000), 27–29, 157–159.

invited him to take the pledge. During this time, De Sanctis was teaching Greek history at the University of Rome, where he had moved from Turin two years earlier, once Beloch had retired.

In his youth, De Sanctis had published a book on Greek history about the birth of an ancient state from archaic tribes (*Atthis*);¹⁸ this process, he thought, was linked to the freedom of the *polis*. He later admitted to being influenced by German historiography and the experience of the Italian *Risorgimento*.¹⁹ Afterwards, he dedicated himself to the ancient Romans, writing a monumental *History of Rome* which brought him international recognition;²⁰ he was also rewarded with an honorary degree from Oxford in 1925, together with Winston Churchill. At the end of the 1920s, De Sanctis returned to Greek history; the coincidence with the stabilization of the authoritarian regime is significant rather than accidental. As we have seen above, the atmosphere was constrained in Roman studies, although the Greek field was not faring all that much better. His former student Aldo Ferrabino had taken Beloch's theory that national unity should be the criterion for evaluating history to extremes; the ancient Greeks had not been able to achieve independence and unification as modern nations had, so their history, Ferrabino maintained, had to be considered a failure. This condemnation recalls some themes of Fascist ideology, as we will see below, and stimulated De Sanctis to put forward his own conception of Greek history.

In "The Essence and Characteristics of Greek History" (1929),²¹ the inaugural lecture of a course at Rome university, De Sanctis reaffirms the principle of national unity as an interpretative key to Greek history, but at the same time accepts Croce's lesson that the history of peoples is possible only when there is awareness and will to collaborate with one another.²² Therefore, De Sanctis excludes Homer and the archaic age from Greek history, which from his perspective began in 481 BC, when most *poleis* bonded with an oath against Persian invasion; the peoples who did not share this alliance as Western Greeks, he claims, could not be included in this history. Nonetheless, unification was ultimately impossible because *poleis* would not give away their freedom; some

18 The first edition is from 1898, the second and revised edition dates from 1912.

19 See De Sanctis (1936), 97.

20 In fact, the *History of Rome* was never completed, even though it included eight volumes from Rome's beginnings to 133 BC.

21 This essay is included in De Sanctis (1932), 5–27, a book which was published by Laterza following Croce's advice.

22 See Croce (1930), II 249–251 and Croce (1966), 303–314. This conception is also present in his *History of Italy*, which begins with the unification: cf. Croce (1928).

cities, such as Athens, Sparta, and Thebes tried to impose their hegemony between the fifth and fourth century BC, but failed; nor did the Macedonians manage truly to unify Greece, so that there is no possible political history in the Hellenistic age, nor even after the Romans conquered the country.

So, on the one hand, De Sanctis confirms the unitary principle, made less artificial through the reception of Croce's thought; however, the consequence is that Greek history becomes a sequence of short hegemonies, doomed to decline immediately after obtaining their *acmé*. On the other hand, the Italian scholar refuses to adopt Beloch's solution, that Macedonian monarchy gave unity to Greece, nor does he accept Droysen's view of Hellenism as political history. Accepting one of these two interpretations would imply a denial of the worth of the *polis*' freedom which is, he asserts, the deepest value of ancient Greece; so, during the same years in which Croce presented his conception of the history of freedom, De Sanctis turned to George Grote, the nineteenth-century English scholar who had written a grandiose *History of Greece* inspired by radical liberalism.

De Sanctis' intense reflection on the meaning of Greek history finds another landmark in "The Essence and Characteristics of Ancient History",²³ a speech which he could not deliver because the Fascists had banished him from the university. Here, he acknowledges ancient history as the ideal and real premise of modern civilization, especially in terms of the fundamental principle of freedom of thought; however, he considers very negatively the tendency towards imperialism that recurred in the ancient world until its end, since the different hegemonies imposed themselves by denying freedom, and so prepared the way for their collapse. According to him, not only Greek history, but the whole of ancient history, ends in failure.

This passionate rethinking was apparent in his *History of the Greeks* (1939), whose title is itself worthy of note: this was no mere "Greek history", but rather a history of the Greek people. In the introduction, De Sanctis announces that he still wishes to deal with political history, even though it should be theoretically impossible to do so given its lack of development; what makes this possible is its interdependence with the history of Greek civilization. So, alongside the traditional problem of national unity, he ascribes much importance to Athenian democracy and moral and cultural values; what stands out are political freedom and liberty of thought; sixth-century Ionia and fifth-century Athens; Thucydides and Socrates. Therefore De Sanctis begins to separate cultural history from political history, though this division is not completely fulfilled; *Kul-*

23 See De Sanctis (1932), 29–61.

turgeschichte lies next to and beyond traditional *Staatsgeschichte*; in fact, the former legitimates the latter. It is debatable which factor had greater influence on him, Croce's *History of Europe*, or some themes of German classicism between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁴

At the same time, a similar separation between culture and politics also characterized De Sanctis as a man. He never deviated from his opposition to Fascism in spite of its grave effects; after the refusal to take the oath, he lost not only his position and salary but was even banned from public libraries, as he recalls in his memoirs.²⁵ However, he continued to oversee the section on classical antiquity for the *Italian Encyclopedia*, the huge work directed by Giovanni Gentile, who had also inspired the Fascist government to demand that he take the oath. The philosopher had used De Sanctis and other non-Fascist and even anti-Fascist scholars for this enterprise because he wanted it to express not a party program but the best culture of Italy in its entirety; nevertheless, it is clear that Gentile aimed "to drive Italian intellectuals into osmosis with Fascism", even though it seems exaggerated to claim that the *Italian Encyclopedia* was "the principal instrument by which the regime enforced its own cultural policy".²⁶

We can understand this contradiction within De Sanctis only by reminding ourselves of his personal consciousness of his mission to serve Italy, which he considered imperative, both as a Catholic and as a scholar. After all, the desire to separate culture and politics was not so exceptional in De Sanctis' life. Even as early as 1892, when he received his university degree, he wrote to a friend that "it is necessary to do anything to close the door to politics in whichever form it turns up, if we desire science to be tranquilly cultivated among us".²⁷ After the Second World War, he clashed with Croce on whether and how far to purge the very old and prestigious Accademia dei Lincei of Fascist scholars, saying that "it was necessary not to imitate Fascism in submitting science to politics",²⁸ and resigned from the position of commissioner for its reconstruction. However, although I do not wish to call into question De Sanctis' credit in ensuring that the classical section of *Enciclopedia Italiana* remained "one of the least corrupted of the entire work, in spite of its dangerous themes",²⁹ this

24 The influence of Croce is affirmed by Momigliano (1961, 117), though it is strongly downplayed by Sasso (1985, 229).

25 See De Sanctis (1970), 143–157.

26 D'Orsi (2001), 41–42.

27 This letter is published in Accame (1971), 454.

28 De Sanctis (1970), 158–161 (quotation at 159).

29 Bandelli (1991), 381. On De Sanctis' role in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* see Cagnetta (1990), 91–205.

contradiction remains, even when some scholars may attempt to minimize it as illusory with unconvincing arguments.³⁰ To be sure, De Sanctis' own ambition to separate culture and politics did not result—and could not have resulted—in a real separation between culture and ideology. His ideology also emerged at times in his historical works—for instance, in his judgments on colonialism, or in comments on the theory of Indo-European supremacy over Semitic peoples.³¹ Both these stances can be interpreted using the category of Orientalism, which Edward Said so well dissected, and which may be summarized as “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures”,³² an idea that saturated an entire era of studies both of European culture and ancient history, and which is arguably still with us in the twenty-first century.³³

Hints of Fascist Ideology: Ferrabino

Aldo Ferrabino had been one of De Sanctis and Beloch's most promising students; he had studied in Turin and Rome between 1910 and 1916, and had acquired a grounded competence in historical-philological methods.³⁴ He was also not insensitive to the idealistic philosophy of Croce and Gentile; on the contrary, he felt ever more strongly the need of a philosophy of history which could give meaning to his own scholarship and provide certainties in place of learned conjectures. His essays on Greek history were accompanied by many articles on historical theory during the 1920s, in which he gradually distances

30 Cf. Amico (2007), 146.

31 There is clear disagreement among De Sanctis' students about the question of the alleged Indo-European superiority over Semitic peoples; while Treves maintained that there was a racist element in his professor's thought, Accame always denied this: cf. Treves (1970), especially 234 and 249, and Accame (1984); Accame (1995), XII–XIV. On De Sanctis' colonialism see Bandelli (1980), Bandelli (1981), and Canfora (1989), 250–251, 264–267.

32 Said (2003), 7.

33 Cf. Bernal (1987), a work that has provoked extensive discussions and controversies in classical studies because it maintains that the theory of alleged ancient Greek superiority over Oriental and African peoples was a racial myth constructed by English and German scholars between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More recently on this question see Vlassopoulos (2007), 1–10, 101–122; on racism in Classical scholarship in Nazi Germany, see Altekamp in this volume. Even today, stereotypical views of Oriental peoples as being incapable of free and democratic government are still very alive and efficacious—so that this trope provides a very interesting case of the *longue durée* in the history of ideas.

34 For a more complete biographical profile of Ferrabino, see Treves (1996).

himself from Croce and approaches Gentile more closely; on the one hand, he adopts an idealistic identification of philosophy and history; on the other hand, he introduces a radical dualism between true and false, concrete and abstract, good and bad, and contrasts civil history, centered on the force organized in armies, with eternal history, the union of the soul with God; that is, an opposition between historical pessimism and moral and religious metahistory.³⁵ Thus, Ferrabino found no meaning any more in mainstream interpretations of history, and especially in Greek history, as becomes clear from his book *The Athenian Empire* (1927), in which he condemns both the Athenian Empire and Athenian politicians as unable to achieve the unification of the Greek people. He shows only sarcasm and contempt for Athenian democracy: the Athenian populace seem to him to be a “restless and unstable mass”, “unfit to understand the real substance of what they applauded in their assemblies”, a mob that “soon forgets, often changes, sacrifices old idols to new ones”.³⁶ His criticisms of ancient democracy are in tune with the Fascist critique of modern democracy; in particular, when he assumes that force is the supreme state law, we may recognize the direct influence of Gentile’s political thought, which supported the ethical state without any distinction between state, family and civil society. During these years, Gentile presented his vision as “absolute liberalism”, but actually suggests an identification between authority and law, and eclipses the difference between free, manipulated or extorted consensus; it is not astonishing that his theory was later judged as totalitarian.³⁷

Ferrabino illustrates his conception of history in his essay *The Dissolution of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (1929), where Greek history is seen as being dominated by the conflict between the liberty of *poleis* and the desire for hegemony, which explodes in the fifth century BC when Athens and then other cities try to implement a union and fail; if unity was impossible, the enslavement to Rome, he claims, has to be considered right. Ferrabino criticizes the two main strands of Greek studies during the nineteenth century, that of Grote with his idea of liberty as drama, and that of Beloch, with his thesis of Philip as the man who united Greece. If Greeks were unable to choose between liberty and power, it means that their history is a failure; the right equilibrium, he asserts, was reached only by the Romans, who were unique as a people in

35 His essays on the theory and philosophy of history are collected in Ferrabino (1962), a book explicitly dedicated to the memory of Gentile. For a detailed analysis, see Piovan (1996).

36 Ferrabino (1927), 45, 57, 410.

37 See Bobbio (1990), 155–160.

the ancient world in that they achieved a perfect synthesis of individuality and universality, anarchy and panarchy, democracy and theocracy, in order to found the Italian nation.

It is undeniable that there are some points here in common with Fascist ideology, even though this similarity has sometimes been minimized.³⁸ The political value of Ferrabino's stance clearly appears when he compares Croce's liberal idea with Greek freedom, defined as an "arbitrary and inorganic freedom of individual longing",³⁹ not to mention the glorification of *romanità* with its tones and lexicon typical of Fascism: While Greece is associated with democracy and anarchy, and the East with slavery and theocracy according to an Orientalist point of view,⁴⁰ Rome provides the right middle path; a fusion of authority and people; creator of the concept of the nation, "the institution that can conciliate the opposing parties of the few and the many".⁴¹ We should not forget that Fascism was both claiming to be the legitimate heir of ancient Rome, and at the same time attempting to transcend the antithesis between Capitalism and Bolshevism through nation and corporatism, even though the attempts to found a truly corporative organization failed. However, if the influence of Fascist ideology in Ferrabino's works is not negligible in the years around 1930, it is also necessary to remember that he was openly embarrassed about the 1938 anti-Semitic laws and the resulting expulsion of Jews from Italian universities, a stance which was not so common at that time, and that his distance from Fascism did become clear after the beginning of the Second World War,⁴² as in the case of many, maybe most Italians who had supported the regime until then.

Liberty and the Meeting of Ancient Civilizations: Momigliano

Arnaldo Momigliano, born into an old Jewish family in Piedmont, obtained his *laurea* (a PhD-equivalent, gained after four years of study) in Turin with

38 Cf. Accame (1980), 339, *contra* Canfora (1980), 78–79; Cagnetta (1990), 115–117. Mazzarino (1980, 350) seems to misunderstand Ferrabino's political views.

39 Ferrabino (1931), 391.

40 The allusion obviously refers to those representations of the Orient which have been so well analyzed in the aforementioned fundamental books by Said (2003) for literature, and Bernal (1987) for ancient historical studies.

41 Ferrabino 1937, (137).

42 On Ferrabino's public behavior between 1938 and 1943 see Opocher (1996), 48 and Ventura (1996b), 175, 189, 190 n.

De Sanctis in June 1929, when he was only 21.⁴³ His thesis focused on Thucydides, fusing De Sanctis' teaching on source criticism, some suggestions from Ferrabino's *Athenian Empire*, and Croce's different ways of conceptualizing the history of historiography.⁴⁴ Momigliano takes from Ferrabino the idea that Athenian imperialism is egoistic, but does not accept the thesis that in classical Greece there could exist an ideology of national unity in opposition to the *polis*. The young student continued meditating very intensely upon this subject in the following years, as we can see in his review of Croce's short essay on ancient and modern liberty from 1931. There, Croce stresses the importance of Benjamin Constant's famous conference of 1819 as the starting point of modern discussions on the history of freedom.⁴⁵ Momigliano's review can be identified as including the theoretical premise and a general sketch of most of the problems which remained at the core of his very long-lasting intellectual activity. The young historian agrees with Constant and Croce in defining Greek freedom as the right to participate in government, while later, in the Hellenistic age, the bond between freedom and a specific form of government breaks, and a more interiorized notion of liberty, in opposition to the state, emerges with Judaism and Christianity, which subordinates the state to religious consciousness, thus anticipating modern freedom: "The State, the earlier condition of liberty and later the boundary of liberty, eventually became the fulfillment of liberty itself".⁴⁶

While, on the one hand, Momigliano accepts the difference between ancient and modern freedom, on the other hand, he elaborates a line of development and progressive enrichment of freedom in the ancient world, in which each period has its own value and many civilizations—Greece, Hellenism, Judaism and Rome—flow into one another and are tied to modern consciousness through Christianity. This conception, which reveals a tight link with Croce's *Historismus*, is the basis of the essays which followed, such as that on Demosthenes, who is not censured as harshly as in Ferrabino's work, but is still portrayed as unable to transcend the municipalism of the *polis*.⁴⁷ Momigliano

43 For a more complete biographical profile of Momigliano see Di Donato (2011) with previous bibliography. More recent, important studies on Momigliano's work and historical thought include Polverini (2006a), Miller (2007), and Cornell and Murray (2014), on which see my considerations in Piovan (2016).

44 For Momigliano's thesis on Thucydides see Piovan (1997).

45 See Croce (1931), 294–301 and Momigliano (1975b); for Constant's conference "The liberty of Ancients compared to that of Moderns" see Constant (1988), 309–328.

46 Momigliano (1975b), 907.

47 Momigliano (1975c).

finds an ideological alternative in the idea of common peace, and in those writers such as Isocrates and Theopompus who contribute to preparing, perhaps unwittingly, the path for Philip II, and cooperate with Greece's takeover by Hellenism.⁴⁸ Therefore, Philip is not considered as the brute destroyer of Greek civilization, nor as the founder of a Greek national state, but as the herald of values such as peace, harmony and the end of reciprocal oppression: "Philip is the origin (in the West) of a mentality that will dissolve the far too egoistic nature of Greek freedom, and later that of the republican Romans, and will dissolve itself only when Christianity brings forth the conditions for a selfless and human freedom".⁴⁹ In the same period, Momigliano followed Croce's teaching that historians have to study the historiography of their own problems, and reconsiders modern studies on Greek history; he suggested returning to Droysen, who formulated the concept of Hellenism as a cultural and religious unity, integrated with an awareness of the function of the Roman empire, considered as the middle way between Hellenism and Christianity, as Hegel had suggested.⁵⁰

This historical vision stems from the encounter between De Sanctis' critical method, and the Hegelian and Crocian conception of a rational development of history, in which what follows goes beyond what precedes and there is no space for purely negative eras.⁵¹ It sometimes seems that Momigliano also embraces the communion of philology and philosophy proposed by Croce: in fact, freedom is the universal and philosophic value that is examined in its concrete expressions through philology. Nonetheless, it is possible to perceive a kind of discomfort about such distinctions, as in the introduction to *Philip the Macedonian*, when Momigliano states that it is necessary to ascertain the course of events before putting forward an interpretation, even though this distinction may sound unphilosophical.⁵²

To understand Momigliano's conception fully, we should perhaps not undervalue another element of his intellectual makeup: Judaism—at least as the heritage of a very old cultural tradition. Indeed, Momigliano was educated in a very religious and orthodox family, but at the same time he discovered a sec-

48 See Momigliano (1966b); Momigliano (1934), 183–199.

49 Momigliano (1934), 179.

50 See Momigliano (1955b) and Momigliano (1955c).

51 See the revealing expression "the rationality of the rhythm of that history" in Momigliano (1934), 179. On Hegel's presence in Momigliano's work see Bonacina (1989/90); for Momigliano's relationship with Croce see Gigante (2006); also Momigliano and Chabod (2002), along with an in-depth analysis in Sasso (2002).

52 See Momigliano (1934), VII.

ular point of view very early through his relative Felice Momigliano, a student of Mazzini.⁵³ Thus, it is unsurprising that around 1930 he wrote to De Sanctis that he did not believe in Judaism as a religion but that he was “a believer in the modern philosophy”,⁵⁴ and that a few years later he declared a sharp rejection of Zionism and migration to Palestine, affirming instead his “deep and total adhesion to Italian national life”.⁵⁵ Actually, in his attempt to link his Jewish roots with belonging to the Italian nation, he supported the view put forward in a short review from 1933 that Italian Jews had integrated themselves into the new Italian state during the *Risorgimento* in a similar fashion to the way in which different regional identities such as those of Piedmont or Sicily had all flowed into a unique national identity.⁵⁶ But however much Momigliano felt and presented himself as a Jew fully integrated into Italian history and society, it is easy to perceive in his interest in the meeting of civilizations (Hellenism and the later Roman empire) the effect of a tradition not anchored to a particular nation, but bearing similarities with the cosmopolitan nature of Judaism.⁵⁷ Moreover, in focusing on the peaceful coexistence of different peoples, we cannot avoid noticing some moral and intellectual anxieties which it is not difficult to link to the rise of Nazism, which had come to power in Germany in 1933; therefore for Momigliano, too, we may speak of contemporary history in Croce’s sense.

We have not yet dealt directly with Momigliano’s relationship with Fascism; this theme was debated again and again after his death, and sometimes led to harsh controversy. The debate has mainly been caused by the publication of previously unknown documents: first, the inaugural lecture that Momigliano gave in 1936 at the university of Turin, which was permitted to be published after his death with a warning about “the personal and political situation of who, Jew and not Fascist, was speaking”,⁵⁸ some years later, the editor of

53 See Momigliano (1987b), xxix–xxxI.

54 This letter from Momigliano to De Sanctis is published in Polverini (2006b), 18.

55 The anti-Zionist letter to the President of the Roman Jewish Community is published in Di Donato (1995), 225–226.

56 See Momigliano (1987c). This opinion, judged “historically unfounded” by Dionisotti (1989, 19), was never recalled by him after the Fascist racial laws and the Second World War; in any case, it is worth stressing that it was approved at the time (1933) by Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*: his note is republished in Momigliano (1987b), 241–242.

57 See Pesante (2002). On Momigliano’s Judaism in the 1930s, and the later evolution of his views, there are various and diverging opinions—e.g. Fubini (1998) and Levis Sullam (2007).

58 The conference is published in Dionisotti (1989), 109–130; on Momigliano’s warning and

Momigliano's legacy gave notice that he had found a membership card from a musical group of the GUF ("University Fascist Youth Group") from 1928 among his papers,⁵⁹ which stimulated a passionate discussion in the *Times Literary Supplement* about the young historian's supposed sympathies with Fascism.⁶⁰ Some time afterwards, a letter written in 1938 by Momigliano to Bottai, the Fascist Minister of Education, was discovered in the Italian National State Archive, in which Momigliano lists his own services and those of his family to Fascism, with the aim of obtaining less severe treatment after racial laws had expelled him and all Jews from the university;⁶¹ its publication was followed by a harsh polemic in the Italian press.⁶²

A very detailed examination of all these documents is impossible here. In brief, I would argue that the membership card from 1928 is meaningless, because it had nothing to do with politics; the card of the Fascist Party in the 1930s is more relevant because membership was not obligatory in order to teach at a university; however, it was quite normal if someone wanted to advance his position in a state career, so this card does not necessarily imply an ideological accommodation with Fascism. The letter to Bottai should be read in its original context: Momigliano was suddenly jobless, fired from a profession he had taken up so proficiently, without any alternative nor sufficient personal assets for himself and his family. The letter was certainly humiliating for him, but it is similar to many others written in the same situation by Jews who had accepted the regime for many years and had sometimes even supported it actively; it is a testimony to a very dramatic moment in the life of Momigliano as a man, without necessarily discrediting him as a scholar.

Nevertheless, it seems imprudent to suggest, as Dionisotti has done, that Momigliano was anti-Fascist;⁶³ it is more correct to state that before 1938 he tried to come to a quiet accommodation with the regime; he knew very well that he was working in public office and that dissenting could be very dan-

the contextualization of this text, see the differing views of Dionisotti (1989, 97–103) and Canfora (1990). I share the opinion of Franco (2008, 438–439).

59 Di Donato (1995), 219.

60 Harris (1996a); Harris (1996b); Murray (1996); Cornell (1996); Dionisotti (1996); Ridley (1996); Dionisotti (1997).

61 See Fabre (2001), who compares this letter with a contrasting statement to the English authorities in 1940 in which Momigliano list his merits as an anti-Fascist.

62 See Canfora, interviewed by Fiori (2001), Di Donato (2001) and Stille (2001); later stances in Cracco Ruggini (2006) 112–113; Clemente (2007), 1150–1156; Franco (2008), 434; Lauria (2010), 29–36.

63 See Dionisotti (1989), 99.

gerous, as he recalled himself much later.⁶⁴ The collaboration with the *Italian Encyclopedia*, for which he wrote about two hundred entries in seven years, unveils an ambiguity that was typical of many other scholars; as mentioned above, Gentile wanted to use the encyclopedia as a means both to build consensus among intellectuals and to promote Fascism culturally beyond the boundaries of Italy. To this end, he had managed to involve even well-known anti-Fascists such as De Sanctis, Plinio Fraccaro or Samuele Levi della Vida, allowing them some autonomy, but assigning the most politically or culturally delicate entries to “reliable” contributors.⁶⁵ Another example would be his contribution to the Augustean exhibition of *Romanità* in 1937/38.⁶⁶ As Bowersock put it, “in the 1930s Momigliano may have thought he could find a way to accommodate the intellectual climate of the age with his own disinterested research.”⁶⁷ One could potentially apply to the young Momigliano the critical assessment of Norberto Bobbio when he considered his personal behavior as a young man: “The majority of young people belonged in that grey zone [...] which was partly Fascist, partly not—Fascist in certain circumstances and non-Fascist in certain other circumstances; they also knew how to exercise their critical faculties from time to time when judging the decisions of the Duce and the hierarchs as good or bad.”⁶⁸

64 See Momigliano (1966c), 304. One might contrast Klemperer's situation, as described by Porter in this volume.

65 For Gentile and the *Enciclopedia Italiana* see Turi (2002); for the section on classical antiquity see Cagnetta (1990).

66 It was Momigliano himself who spoke on this in a letter and in a curriculum of 1936 published by Fabre (1995, 89); for a very recent view on Momigliano's contribution to the event see Canfora (2013), 59. This exhibition was the most important event organized to celebrate the two-thousandth anniversary of Augustus' birth: see Scriba (1995) and Arthurs' chapter in this volume.

67 Bowersock (1991), 36. I disagree with Bowersock about his judgment on “Rome in the imperial age”, the entry Momigliano wrote for the *Italian Encyclopedia* (republished in Momigliano 1980, 591–673): this was actually fairly nonconformist, especially if compared with Fascist glorification of the Roman empire—see also Franco (2008, 434). Besides, Bowersock seems to misunderstand what Gramsci thought of Momigliano's thesis on the integration of Jews into the Italian nation, because the former indeed expressed no “strong rebuttal” of the latter's opinion.

68 Bobbio (2004).

Anti-Fascist Praise of Greek Freedom: Treves

In the past, the debate on Greek freedom has often been remembered, but the presence of Piero Treves has often been underestimated and sometimes even ignored.⁶⁹ However, his contribution does not lack originality and strength, although he was the youngest of the students involved.

The young Treves came from an unusual family background: he was the son of Claudio Treves, one of the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party at the turn of the century, who was an adversary of Mussolini even before Fascism. Piero grew up in a secular and bourgeois milieu, a lover of poetry and literature, deeply anchored in Italian and European culture.⁷⁰ His encounter with De Sanctis was decisive; he followed his teacher from Turin to Rome, where he obtained his *laurea* in November 1931, at only 20 years of age. His thesis was published in 1933 by Laterza, thanks to Croce, with the title *Demosthenes and Greek Freedom*; it is not a biography of the Athenian orator, but rather a reconstruction of the period of Greek history from the battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) to Demosthenes' death (321 BC). Its perspective is quite different from the usual learned tradition: it contains neither a close examination of events nor a detailed analysis of sources. Instead, Treves focuses upon moral and political history according to Croce's model, in which moral and spiritual forces, and political and cultural ideals, count more than military strategies, organization or assets; at the same time, he refuses to criticize Demosthenes as a short-sighted politician or to praise Philip as the author of Greek national unity. On the one hand, Treves recognizes the limits of the Demosthenic conception that caused Athenian freedom and hegemony in Greece to overlap; on the other hand, the orator is celebrated for the exalted moral and spiritual consciousness of his fight for freedom, and is compared multiple times to Mazzini; both are defined as "apostle[s] of freedom".⁷¹

69 Treves is ignored by Tessitore (1984), which is nonetheless a useful essay for framing philosophical perspectives on this debate. On the "ill fortune" attending Treves' book among specialists of antiquity see Casali (1980), 146.

70 To reconstruct the biography, education and work of Piero Treves, the following works are essential: Pertici (1994); Franco (2011); Clemente (2016).

71 Treves (1933), 67, 131. Even if Treves cannot be assimilated to the disciples of Stefan George, whose influence on classical German studies is well analyzed in this volume by Rebenich, it is interesting to note that he appreciated *Paideia*, Werner Jaeger's principal work—he both reviewed its first German edition very positively, and also praised it after the Second World War, whereas Momigliano formulated a very critical judgment; for more on this, see Franco (1994). Jaeger was one of Wilamowitz's students who was most influenced by the

The book was harshly reviewed by students close to Fascism,⁷² and also by Momigliano, who criticized it for comparing ancient and modern liberty in such an anti-historical way as to be almost nonsensical,⁷³ which was and still is a very ungenerous judgment. Indeed, Treves distinguishes between ancient and modern concepts far more than Momigliano acknowledges; it is untrue that he does not understand the meaning of Droysen's Hellenism; what he resolutely rejects is the teleological point of view, the idea that history has a "rational rhythm", and the consequent underestimation of the *victa causa*.⁷⁴ Treves believes and will maintain that the defeated contribute to history both by conditioning the victors, and by influencing following generations by means of their example. "No *victa causa* [...] was so alive in history as the *victa causa* of Demosthenes", who gave to posterity "an everlasting word of freedom".⁷⁵ Treves' book was moved by authentic ideal fervor, supported by a sound knowledge of ancient sources, and his courage should not be underestimated, especially in comparison with other contemporary studies. It is not meaningless that his *Demosthenes* is included in the bibliography that circulated among young anti-Fascists around 1935 quoted by Aldo Capitini, the Italian master of non-violence, in his memoirs;⁷⁶ it reveals that its true value could be understood even beyond academia.

Learning from the Past, Understanding the Present

This debate about the value of Greek freedom cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to an understanding of classical studies under Fascism; rather, it is the most

George-circle's conception of modern research in antiquity; on the relationship between Jaeger and the George-circle, see Rebenich in this volume.

72 For example, Caioli (1934, 370) speaks of Treves as "an affectionate sentimental man" who "is lacking personality" and was possessed of a certain "libertarian devilry".

73 Momigliano (1975d), 939.

74 That is clearly one of the issues, and perhaps even the principal criticism, raised by Treves in his two reviews of Momigliano's *Philip the Macedonian*; see Treves (1936a), 68 and Treves (1936b), 207. Discussions and even rivalry had already begun to take place between them: see Dionisotti (1989), 34–46; Franco (2011, XIII–XXIV) is very useful for highlighting the different historiographical perspectives of these two classical scholars.

75 Treves (1933), 192–193.

76 Capitini (1966), 100. See also the reasonable judgment of Timpanaro (1980, 375): "the book on Demosthenes and Greek freedom [...] represented a courageous utterance of anti-Fascism." It is worth emphasizing that Timpanaro had Marxist inclinations, rather than being of a liberal bent, like Treves.

outstanding example of intellectual resistance to the authoritarian or totalitarian regime from classical scholarship.⁷⁷ It was undoubtedly stimulated by the specific political and ideological climate of this era, but it cannot, in my opinion, be dismissed for that reason, as if it were a subjective topic devoid of worth outside its original context. The point is that any attempt to understand the past deeply is always conditioned by particular circumstances; there is no interpretation without a prior premise, and if the interpreter proclaims that their own work is free of any influence, either they have nothing interesting to say or they are not fully aware of what forms their *Weltanschauung* (as is often the case).⁷⁸ To conclude, we could usefully apply Oswyn Murray's observation about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century debates on the *virtus* of Athenian democracy to this discussion between Italian classicists during the first half of the twentieth century:

Like all attempts to understand and to learn from the past, they combine a proper attention to antiquarian research with a philosophical approach, and a recognition that all history that offers any interpretation at all is ultimately contemporary history. But the necessary desire to be relevant to contemporary society, while it is admirable in itself, should not allow us to neglect the interpretations of previous ages. For they have the power to liberate us from the short-term passions of contemporary politics.⁷⁹

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77 It is not possible here to discuss the academic controversy on the totalitarian or authoritarian nature of Fascism in detail; for a general overview of this discussion, see Tarchi (2003), 47–49, 127–133.

78 Obviously, this is not to say that any interpretation is acceptable or satisfactory because it must be related to the documents it purports to interpret. On the epistemology of classics, I follow Cambiano (2010).

79 Murray (2010), 159.

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Philology in Exile: Adorno, Auerbach, and Klemperer

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The impact of fascism on philology under the Nazis is easier to document than it is to fathom. Scholars have been wrestling with this historical catastrophe for decades. New information continues to be unearthed and, more slowly still, processed.¹ The present essay belongs to the latter, interpretive side of scholarship. I will be producing no new documentary evidence *per se*, but will instead focus on some of the ways in which practitioners of philology as this is ordinarily understood—namely, as the study of remote cultures through their linguistic products²—were obliged to confront harsh and often unthinkable realities in the present that were distorting the realities of the past. Many of these scholars were driven into exile (or worse). But it was not scholars alone who suffered during this period. Philology was *itself* forced into exile. What was once imagined to be a lamp for illuminating earlier cultures was transformed into a hammer to be used either for promoting or for criticizing national chauvinism and political conformism. Neutrality was not an option, nor was pretending innocence. In the process, the objects of study were themselves transformed. Self-evident facts suddenly became sites of potentially treacherous reading. Meaning was no longer a theoretical luxury. Lives and not only careers were in the balance. Philology, having run up against its fourth wall, acquired what might be called a “fourth dimension.”³

To be sure, this was not the first time in history that philology had been compelled to stand face to face with its ultimate conditions of possibility. In the late sixteenth century, simply to question the authenticity of the Pentateuch and its Mosaic authorship was to risk being burned alive as a heretic.⁴ Two centuries

1 Seminal studies include Losemann (1977), Näf (1986), Marchand (1996), and Hausmann (2007). See also Bialas and Rabinbach (2006) and Fleming (2007). For a collection of rich archival and historical information about one university alone (Heidelberg), see Eckart, Sellin and Wolgast (2006). See also Roche and Altekamp in this volume.

2 Cf. Gumbrecht (2003), 2–3.

3 A dimension not accounted for in Pollock (2014).

4 As happened to Noël Journet in 1582 in Metz. See Grafton (1991), 204.

on, after a somewhat calmer but still threatening period, when books but not bodies could be burned for similar kinds of offenses (Isaac La Peyrère, 1655), and when excommunication was a live option (Baruch Spinoza, 1674), philological skepticism towards the Bible became *de rigueur*, and was then extended to Homer (Friedrich August Wolf, 1795), after which point the scandals of philology became institutionalized and soon lost their edge. By the time of the Nazi take-over in Germany, philological inquiry had become life-threatening once again, and on an unprecedented scale. But for some, it also proved to be a resource for holding one's ground and resisting the tide of history. In the process, philology was forced out of its disciplinary strongholds and was enlisted in new political and ideological tasks. Classical philology, the presumptive queen of philological investigation, is a case in point. The heritage of Greece and Rome, as lustrous and symbolically potent as ever, no longer occupied the sanctified space that it formerly did. Trespassers abounded. Romance philologists, philosophers, and political leaders or their functionaries all entered the fray. Urgency, desperation, and extremity could be felt on all sides of the debates. In short, philology was taken out of the seminar room and into the streets. It became intensely political. It had turned its face to the present.

These changes are all part of the "exile" that philology experienced in the wake of National Socialism, and which I want to explore here by considering three case studies: the wartime writings of Theodor Adorno, Erich Auerbach, and Victor Klemperer. For all their differences, these three figures share much in common. Each was Jewish. Each was forced into exile, whether external or internal. And each learned to stretch philology to new and unheard of limits as a way of generating a critical resistance to their circumstances. Disregarding conventional boundary lines, their writings pass from the sacred precincts of classical studies, to the work of political, cultural, and ideological critique, and finally to what might be called a philology of everyday life. Together, they offer models of engaged scholarship that are as admirable as they are difficult to imagine repeating today.

Dialectical Philology

We begin with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, specifically the first Excursus on Homer ("Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment"). The book has a complicated history. It was the collaborative effort of several members of the Frankfurt School, who were split between the East and West coasts of the United States after their research center, The Institute for Social Research, had been forced to relocate

from Frankfurt to Geneva in 1933, and then again to New York in 1935. The intensive meetings, brainstorming sessions, dictations (much of the work was dictated to Adorno's wife), editing workshops, and flurries of correspondence that stretched between 1939 and 1944 were spearheaded by the work's two principal authors, who were based in southern California, and whose names eventually appeared on the title page. The first Excursus seems to have been chiefly authored by Adorno between 1941 and 1942 (discussions of this section began in 1939), and I will presume his authorship of this part of the work in what follows.⁵ When the work finally appeared, it was published by the Institute in New York in 1944 in a limited edition as a hectographic typescript under the title *Philosophische Fragmente*. Three years later, a slightly expanded version, now in book form and under its present title, was brought out by Querido in Amsterdam, a publisher of German exiled authors.⁶

The work is even more complicated than the story of its genesis and its publishing history. The most striking fact about *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is the way it mobilizes an unsettling variety of themes: a philosophical critique of myth and enlightenment in the West, a sociological analysis of anti-Semitism, reflections on the culture industry, an excursus on Sade, and an excursus on Odysseus. The inclusion of this last topic is nothing short of astonishing. What could a reading of Homer possibly contribute to a critique of the contemporary scene, at a time when the very walls of civilization were being burned to the ground? As it turns out, the answer is everything. Homer was widely held to be "the foundational text (*Grundtext*) of European civilization."⁷ By "foundational", Adorno means more than the empty cliché that Homer was a timeless classic, the cornerstone of the Western literary canon, and the pristine source of all cultural values. In point of fact, Adorno is not interested in Homer *per se*. He is interested, rather, in Homer's *aura*—not in Homer as the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but in Homer as an object of fascination and identification, as one of the cardinal "quilting points" around which modernity, and German modernity in particular, had constructed its own self-image.⁸ In a draft of the first Excursus, Adorno calls the two Homeric epics "the *Urtex*te"—the "primordial, original texts," virtually the "templates"—"of European civilization,"⁹ and

5 See Wiggershaus (1994), 322; Rabinbach (1997), 167; Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), 221, 224.

6 Wiggershaus (1994), 302–344; Rabinbach (1997), ch. 5; Adorno (1998), 35; Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), 217.

7 Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), 37; trans. adapted. Translations and page references below will refer to this text.

8 Lacan (1997), 268; Žižek (1989).

9 Adorno (1998), 39.

it is in this sense that they have their value, as relics of a primitive form of consciousness that are consistently resacralized and paid homage to in a world that could neither escape from nor account for the persistent magnetism of these two poems. In a word, Adorno is only as invested in Homer as he believes the contemporary world was invested in Homer. And, as it happens, Germany under the Nazis was *very* invested in the aura of Homer, both politically and ideologically, and above all in the mythical origins of Western civilization that could be identified either in Homer or in the prehistorical era that led up to him.

At first glance, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* appears to have nothing to do with antiquity at all. Here is the way the work opens:

Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance [lit., “progressing,” *fortschreitenden*] of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity (*Unheil*). Enlightenment’s program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge. (1)

Dialectic of Enlightenment begins by declaring that the modern promise and ideal of progress was an illusion, a fact that in 1942 ought to have needed little argument, though apparently it did. Its authors might have held that the Enlightenment had utterly failed. But they do not. Instead, their most controversial thesis is the suggestion that fascism was the direct outgrowth of enlightenment thinking: “the wholly *enlightened* earth is radiant with triumphant calamity.” Rather than viewing fascism and enlightenment as opposed movements, the work insists that they are fatally intertwined.

Their fate is intertwined for the same reason that myth and enlightenment are not opposed. Rather, the relationship of myth and enlightenment is dialectical, which is to say phantasmatic: enlightenment *produces* the myths that it would disown as its banished Other (5) and out of a “horror of myth,” that is, out of a horror of its own true nature (22). Enlightenment cannot escape the entanglements of mythology because the enlightenment mentality is itself governed by the primitive logic of mythology—the logic of barbarous violence and irrationality—that it simultaneously seeks to avoid and repress. But this is true only because myth is itself a form of thought that already displays all the essential characteristics of enlightenment. Like enlightenment, myth is tendentially and compulsively identitarian, totalizing, and instrumentalizing. It seeks to fix, in a brutal and “totalitarian” manner, identities and abstract equivalences by means of rubric-like formulas (names and concepts) that explain, simplify,

and unify—and hence falsify—phenomena. In a word, myth “amputates the incommensurable.” This conceptual violence is mirrored in the “primal images of mythical violence” that populate mythology and give it its lurid appeal (8–9). Nature and the self, objectified as such, and conceived as objects to be mastered, are among these mythical products. Finally, myth and enlightenment are dialectical in one more way: the totalizations they aim for are never complete. They always produce a residue, an irresolvable left-over, that falsifies the process itself and that is lodged in subjects as a form of “bad conscience” (in Adorno’s borrowed Nietzschean idiom) and in objects as illusions—such is the logic of dialectical thinking, which names both the process by which objects and concepts are brought into alignment and the attempt to paper over its constitutive imperfections.¹⁰ Because thought is mythologizing and demystifying at one and the same time, critique never transcends what it critiques. Consequently, try as it might, enlightenment cannot disentangle itself from myth, and least of all when it seeks to demythologize and disenchant the world that it inherits from the past (11). Nor can *Dialectic of Enlightenment* hope to detach itself serenely from the objects of its critique and their inherent contradictions. At best, it can expose these immanently and dialectically, but not in some pure and definitive way.

It should be clear that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* involves a disconcerting project: it seeks to bring to the surface the mythologized and regressive dimensions of rational thought to which rational thought is and necessarily must remain blind. But there is one final twist to this critique of the present: not only does enlightenment stand perilously close to the prehistorical world of myth that it would oppose, but it also resembles its current historical successor, totalitarian fascism, which regressively identifies with myth. Here, Adorno can point to the example of Nietzsche’s “pre-fascist followers,” whom he claims had perverted his legacy and misunderstood his ambivalent critique of enlightenment (an ambivalence that Adorno shares), his apparent exponency of life-denying nihilism (belied by an even greater will to self-preservation), and his endorsement of an unruly, intoxicated (and intoxicating) pre-classical antiquity (36). These are “the present-day devotees of the archaic,” or better yet, “the contemporary archaics” (*die heutige Archaiker*), whom Adorno describes a few pages earlier as “German neopagans and administrators of war fever,” and who are said to “use primeval times (*die Urzeit*) for self-advertising” (24; 37). Their hope is to “liquidate enlightenment” and thereby to escape its disabling strictures,

10 See Adorno (2004), 5; dialectics “indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived”; there is always “a remainder.”

whether by undermining the values of modernity or by turning the clock back and celebrating the “primal powers” of a chthonic, mythical, and numinous past (37). But to attempt this is to affirm nothing more than “the fraudulent myth of fascism” (9) and to repeat the mythical logic of enlightenment all over again.¹¹ Adorno’s final twist, then, is not only a restatement of Nietzsche’s critique of modernity and its “bad conscience,” (36) reinserted now into a dramatically changed world. It is also deviously designed, as it not only holds enlightenment responsible for its present-day aftermath, but it also ties fascists and fascist sympathizers to the project of enlightenment that they, in turn, believe they have successfully overthrown. Whence the grim conclusion, which also serves as the work’s premise: “just as myths already entail enlightenment, with every step enlightenment entangles itself more deeply in mythology” (8).

Here, at last, we can see the relevance of Homer’s antiquity. For in order to understand the twentieth-century collapse of the moral world order and the failings of enlightenment, a study of the deepest recesses of myth and history is inescapable. By “recesses” we should understand not the historically remote deposits of mythological thought in its pristine condition, but the contemporary world’s imagination of these things. Assessing Homer is Adorno’s way of diagnosing the contortions of modern historical consciousness and its underlying political and cultural ideologies, albeit in a deliberately provocative way. In this sense, Adorno is conducting a philology not of texts, but of their imaginary construction.¹²

In order to so, Adorno must also conduct a critique of modern-day philology, which he views as the guilty handmaiden of enlightenment mentality. The

11 A case in point: Bengl (1941, 4) denounces the humanistic version of classical antiquity as “a heavily idealized myth,” only to replace it with a fascistically colored and idealized myth of his own—what Helbing (1932, 18) would openly call “the myth of the Third Reich”; see next note. For the general anti-Enlightenment tenor of National Socialist classicism, see Roche (2013), as well as Roche’s subsequent contribution to this volume.

12 See e.g., Berve (1934, 271), on the pressing need “to awaken the shadows of the deep past (*die Schatten der Vorzeit*)” so as to cultivate psychic attachments to antiquity that go beyond dry academic pursuits, and in this way to “bring it to life” again “in all its implacable reality” (*in ihrer ganzen realen Härte*) and as “concrete history.” Bengl (1941, 5) does just this. When he reads Homer, what he sees are the “Siegfried-like heroic figure of Achilles” and “Nordic female figures” like “blond Penelope.” cf. Berve (1934, 270–271) for his vision of Homer. As Hermann Broch remarks in an essay (“The Style of the Mythical Age”) written to accompany the English translation of Rachel Besspaloff’s *On the Iliad* (1947): “It was the fantasy of the Nazis to become the new Achaeans demolishing an old civilization” (Broch 2005, 116). See Helbing (1932, 15) for one more expression of this exact fantasy: “the blond Achaeans, as they greet us in the songs of Homer and Pindar and in Greek sculpture.”

case is nowhere more poignantly made than in a remark that occurs, fittingly, in a footnote on the penultimate page of the Excursus: “Wilamowitz’s writings are among the most striking documents of the German intermingling of barbarism and culture, which is fundamental to modern Philhellenism” (265 n. 61). Up to this point in the Excursus, Wilamowitz has been one of Adorno’s main authorities on the character of ancient myth. Here, in Adorno’s footnote, Wilamowitz’s authority is relabeled “authoritarian,” and Wilamowitz is indicted for being party to the German traits just mentioned. As evidence, Adorno cites Wilamowitz’s approving reaction to Odysseus’ hanging of the maidservants in book 22 of the *Odyssey* in revenge for their complicity with the suitors (“like thrushes ... or pigeons, who have flown into a snare set up for them in a thicket, ... they struggled with their feet for a little, not for very long”):¹³ “the authoritarian scholar enthuses over the simile of the snares, which conveys ‘the dangling of the maids’ corpses in an apt and modern way.’”¹⁴ Brandishing Benjamin’s famous seventh thesis on the philosophy of history from 1940—“there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism”¹⁵—Adorno is taking Benjamin at his word.

The results are nothing short of damning. The short-circuiting of modernity with its most primitive origins, sought after by Germany after the Enlightenment, leads to the inevitable result that “civilization itself resembles the primeval world” (61). The impression that it does not is one of the myths that modernity tells about itself in order to create a distance where none exists. Another, no less potent, myth of modernity is the belief that it can justify its praxis by returning to this primeval world and embracing it as its own. This is the view of the “contemporary archaics,” the neo-Romantic reactionaries, and all those who would claim to be able to recover a lost Dionysian excess in the heroic, ruling, and physically perfected elites of Greek civilization with whom Germany enjoyed “a feeling of proximity and of racial affiliation (*ein Nähegefühl rassischer Verwandtschaft*)” unlike any other—so Jaeger in 1934, although his language here could have come straight out of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.¹⁶ In fact,

13 *Odyssey* 22.467–472; trans. Lattimore.

14 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1927), 67.

15 Benjamin (1996–2003), 4392. Adorno obtained a copy of Benjamin’s last essay through Hannah Arendt in 1941. Both he and Horkheimer agreed that it was Benjamin’s identification of barbarism and culture that best captured their shared convictions (Wiggershaus [1994], 310–311).

16 Jaeger (1934), 4 (quotation); 23–88 (Homer); 24–25 (*Bildung*, viz. human cultivation, understood as *Züchtung*, or “breeding,” the goal of which is to bring into the world a new version of Nietzsche’s “higher man” [*des höheren Menschen*]); further, Jaeger (1933), for the

Hitler was merely reproducing the inherited clichés of the classicists whose ideological positions he had already shaped from the late 1920s on. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* attacks the mythical foundations of modern rationality at their roots by taking on both claims at once. Deconstructing the premises of classical philology and its ideologically functional image of antiquity is thus, for Adorno, a way of penetrating the innermost recesses of the modern unconscious. Once he arrives there, what he uncovers is an intimate link with contemporary anti-Semitism, albeit one that reveals itself in an utterly unexpected fashion.

In the *Odyssey* Adorno locates “a prescient allegory of the dialectic of enlightenment” (27). By allegory he means a reflexive process that moves along two vectors at once in a kind of pincer movement. The search for origins in the archaic period mimics the reversion of enlightenment to myth, while the movement backward in time is answered by the passage from myth to reason that is already detectable in Homer. The reading is both demonstrative and performative. In mimicking the philological desire for premodern origins, Adorno’s reading mirrors the projective identifications of modernity with antiquity. But in revealing the dialectical features of this desire, Adorno’s reading brings out the distortions that these identifications simultaneously produce and conceal. In place of an ideal image, an unwanted reflection is returned to the modern, post-Enlightenment bourgeois reader. The mythical Greek hero and the noble and exalted warrior of Troy, Odysseus, is transformed first into a proto-capitalist and then into a Jew. The Western myth is thus Orientalized, then Semitized, and finally shattered altogether. Let us follow some of this complicated trail briefly before turning to our two other case studies of philology in exile.

Gleichschaltung of classical *Bildung* and politics. cf. Hitler (1942 [1925–1927]) 453, 470. For a later echo, see Bengt (1941, 7): “die nordisch gearteten Hellenen ... uns rassistisch sehr nahe stehen.” A symptom of the times is that Jaeger’s notion of *paideia* could be assailed on both the right (Kriek 1933) and the liberal left (Snell 1935) for being at once empty (too vague and too humanistic) and insufficiently political. The right quickly coopted Jaeger’s platform and reinvigorated it as they saw fit, though they had already anticipated this move as well. See Seeckt (1929, 5), treating classical humanistic *Bildung* as a prerequisite for *Soldatentum*, with Agamemnon (“Atreus Sohn, de[r] Fürst der Scharen,” quoted from Schiller’s poem about the conquest of Troy, “Das Siegesfest,” 1803, but oblivious to the darker implications of the poem) as a first instance (1929, 6); cf. Helbing (1932). Sharper disapproval was rare: Friedländer in Calder III and Braun (1996) is a notable exception. The second edition of *Paideia* vol. 1 (1936), released while Jaeger was safely ensconced in the States, quietly erases the offenses of the first edition, thus attesting to another effect that exile can have on philology. For discussion of Jaeger, see Losemann (2006), 312; Fleming (2007), 349–353; Porter (2010), 243–246; Elsner (2013).

First, Adorno discovers the logic of enlightenment in the heart of Homeric epic, which he claims seeks to set itself off against myth by organizing the materials of mythology, and thereby “comes into contradiction with them” (35). The layers of this struggle are visible in the sedimented strata of Homer’s texts themselves, both in their philological surfaces as texts, and as historical deposits of older and more recent layers of consciousness—for instance, in the traces of solar and Underworld mythology that they contain, which point to older strata, while the fates of the individual heroes such as Odysseus point to more recent accretions (59–60)—or at least so the conventional story goes. Adorno here is drawing on a century of scholarship that culminates in Gilbert Murray’s *The Rise of Greek Epic* (1911) and in Wilamowitz’s studies of Homer and Plato (260 n. 7; 259 n. 5; 261 n. 10; 265 n. 62), all of it positing, only to reject as an abomination, a grisly primeval era from which Homer is said to have emancipated himself.

Adorno’s response is one of utter disbelief. First, he asks where the evidence for such a prehistorical, mythical substratum comes from. The credulity of its exponents belies a fascination with the very thing they would reject (the “image of the vanquished primeval world,” 10), just as the repeated and vehement insistence on its supersession betrays a compulsive irrationality of its own. Enlightenment *must* be imagined as untainted by myth. But this is itself just another myth, and one that in fact sustains enlightenment’s fantasy of itself, which is to say, its founding contradiction. For “this very denial, the core of all civilizing rationality, is the germ cell of a mythical irrationality” (42).

The symptomatic denial of myth through the self-assertion of reason is charted in Homer’s epics, first and foremost in the person of Odysseus. The epitome of rationality and cunning (*List*), he is a perfect fit for an allegory of the enlightened Ego making its way towards eventual autonomy from mythical constraints, which is how Adorno chooses to read him. Only, the path that Odysseus takes is hardly straightforward, and the cunning he exercises does not belong to him alone. There is a dialectic to enlightenment that requires a kind of pact between myth and its antithesis above and beyond the role of individuals. Odysseus is not the agent so much as the plaything of this dialectic. He stands, in effect, for the pact between (violent, bloody, chaotic) myth and (purified, rationalized) enlightenment, which for Adorno is the truth of their secret identity. The fungibility of the one for the other, the sacrifice of myth on the altar of enlightenment, and the exchange of myth for reason, all come at the cost of the loss—the violent sacrifice—of reason, and its reincorporation in a disavowed form at the other end of the process as, precisely, myth and illusion once more.

Odysseus is the product of this process, both its sacrificial victim and its high priest (40). His sacrifice is of an unthinkable kind: that of his own identity and name. It is the most profound self-sacrifice possible, one that displays a kind of “bloody rationality” (41). In reducing himself to a nameless cipher, a Nobody (*Outis*), and in regressing momentarily to an empty, pre-verbal void, or nearly so, Odysseus pulls off the greatest trick of demystification possible: he breaks the chain of mythological mimesis that magically links names and essences, and he thereby cunningly reinvests language with a rational and intentional content (53). It is in this precise sense that Odysseus is the prototypical enlightenment figure: self-pre-possessing, he is the first bourgeois subject, whose identity is founded upon the twofold gesture of self-disavowal and self-reappropriation. For all its rationality, this founding gesture is ultimately unwilling: “the artful Odysseus cannot do otherwise” (53). And for all its demythifying and demystifying qualities it ends up re-enchancing what it empties out, likewise involuntarily. Once the empty category of the self has been put into place, language rushes in as the magical supplement of this void: it produces a glib and uncontrollable stream of chatter (*ibid.*)—the chatter of the tales that Odysseus tells about himself, but also that of his uncontrollable disclosure to the Cyclops. “The clever one is—in contrast to the proverb—always tempted to speak too much” (54; trans. adapted), and Nobody reclaims his identity as Somebody. Such is “the dialectic of eloquence,” which is really a dialectic of stupid “garrulity”—of speech run amok, whose sole function is to fill the empty void of a subject who knows too much and disavows what he knows, caught as he is in the maws of myth and reason.

To this reading of Homer, Adorno adds an unexpected twist. For, in his compulsive garrulity, Odysseus reveals himself to be not merely a pathetic bourgeois subject *avant la lettre*, but also, surprisingly, a Jew:

“*Oudeis*,” who compulsively proclaims himself to be Odysseus, already bears features of the Jew who, in fear of death, continues to boast of a superiority which itself stems from the fear of death; revenge on the middleman stands not only at the end of bourgeois society but at its beginning, as the negative utopia toward which coercive violence tends in all its forms. (54)

The nomination of Odysseus as a Jew is shocking, but it does not arrive completely unprepared. Earlier, Adorno had remarked how Odysseus in his “pathetic guise of the beggar” recalls “the features of the oriental merchant,” footnoting the work of Victor Bérard, who had brought out the “Semitic element” of the

Odyssey in 1930 (48 with 262 n. 14), though Bérard was hardly the first to attempt to make these connections. Jewish and Oriental traits are noted elsewhere in the Excursus, briefly and in passing: the metamorphosis of Odysseus' crew into pigs at Circe's hands is speculated to be a reminiscence of the taboo on swine among Jews, and of its possible Ionian counterpart (55); the "lotus is an oriental food" (50); Odysseus marks the transition from gypsy-like nomadism to propertied possessions: he symbolizes the point where "power and labor diverge" (9).¹⁷ These are only the explicit clues. Designating Odysseus a *homo œconomicus* and the *Odyssey* a Robinsonade, and stating that Odysseus is a shipwrecked hero who makes of his "weakness ... a social strength," rounds out the picture (48). Capitalist economy has its origins in Odysseus the wandering and exilic Jew, in this, the founding document of European civilization by Homer.¹⁸

Blaming Jews for the ills of enlightenment was a common cultural pastime on the German right from the nineteenth century onward.¹⁹ And in point of fact, the German philological tradition in classics was explicitly premised on the exclusion of the Near East and the Semitic (and above all Jewish) tribes, starting first with F.A. Wolf (1807), who insisted that these peoples were intrinsically incompatible with the cultures of Greece and Rome. Because they had failed to attain the "higher" levels of "genuine intellectual culture," they did not merit the distinction of "'civil culture' or 'civilization.'" They lacked the requisite "*Bildung*."²⁰ And yet, for all this, Odysseus as Wandering Jew and *homo œconomicus* was already an obsolete mythologeme, though perhaps not quite an obsolete ideologeme, in 1942. He was obsolete, not just because Jews were being exterminated in the death camps, but because Jews were no longer economically viable: "Now that [their existence] is no longer needed by the rulers for economic reasons, the Jews are designated as their absolute object, existing merely for the exercise of power"—so reads the final and culminating essay of the book, entitled "Elements of Anti-Semitism: Limits

17 Adorno described the Jews as "the secret gypsies of history" in a brief sketch of an essay that he sent to Horkheimer in 1940 (Adorno and Horkheimer 2004, 101).

18 The Jewishness of Adorno's Odysseus is surprisingly little commented on, especially given the authors' intention to make the whole of the *Dialectic* project revolve around the problem of anti-Semitism (Adorno and Horkheimer 2004, 255), but see the prominent exception of Rabinbach (1997), 186–188; expanded in Rabinbach (2000).

19 See Gross (2005).

20 Wolf (1869) (rpt. of *Darstellung der Altertumswissenschaft*, 1807) 2:817–819. See Grafton (1999); Porter (2000), 278. Later avatars include Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1884), 415–416 and Jaeger (1934), 6, who repeats Wolf nearly verbatim. The neighboring discipline of *Orientalistik* was no less conflicted (cf. Marchand 2006).

of Enlightenment” and dating from 1944 (137; trans. adapted).²¹ Condemning Odysseus *qua* Jew to the status of an archaic myth makes some sense after all. For, as this essay goes on to add, “the Jewish middleman fully becomes the image of the devil only when he has ceased to exist economically” (171; trans. adapted). Perhaps this is the case, but ideologically and symbolically the figure of the Jew never really ceased to matter, because it had always (“archaically”) represented an unassimilable left-over of Western civilization, which is to say, that which civilization could never fully fathom about *itself*.²² Consequently, the Jews’ symbolic function could migrate freely, as a way of masking incoherencies of all kinds, including those that bedeviled Homer’s place in the Western imagination.

A question that haunted the German reception of Homer even before Wolf was precisely his proximity to Asia Minor: Was he even Greek? Concealed within this worry was the buried awareness that Homer could not *really* be German either. Such is the dialectical impropriety of the modern myth of Homer. Latching onto this anxiety, Adorno magnifies it by rendering Odysseus into a Jew. Adorno’s Orientalizing of Homer at the height of the Nazi appropriation of Homer and Hellenism can only have felt inordinate at the time, as the example of Rudolf Borchardt shows. In 1930 Borchardt, himself an uncomfortably assimilated German Jew, rejected Homer for being Asiatic and Orientalizing as well as plebeian, democratizing, pedestrian, prosaic, novelistic, and a spokesperson for “seafarers and traders”—Odysseus is the emblem—and therefore untrue to the pre-Homeric world of myth that finds its fullest expression in Pindar.²³ Borchardt was mobilizing a hallowed cliché of German Hellenism—Dorianism—and landing himself in odd contradictions in the process, likewise an inheritance from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁴ One of these contradictions was the difficulty that the search for pre-Homeric myth inevitably landed one in the East again.

Adorno explicitly takes issue with Borchardt, “the most impotent of the esoteric apologists of German heavy industry,” early on in the first Excursus: the mythical authenticity that Borchardt craves, but finds lacking in Homer, is

21 For background to this essay, see Jay (1986).

22 Cf. Adorno, letter to Horkheimer (1940), in Adorno and Horkheimer (2004), 102: “the Jews are the ones who [symbolically, in the imagination of the West] have refused to become ‘civilized’ and to submit to the dictates of labor,” i.e., they represent the incomplete “renunciation of the drives” (*Triebverzicht*). This is their *Urgeschichte*, whose “origins must be sought in archaic, but socially real, movements” (2004, 100).

23 Borchardt (1930), 77–153 (“Nachwort”).

24 See Porter (2000), ch. 5.

nothing other than a product of his desire to find it. Myth is *already* enlightenment, here manifestly in the “service of repressive ideology” (37). And though Borchardt falls just short of making the identification, Adorno completes it for him: “the yellow patch (*der gelbe Fleck*) [i.e., the Jewish gold star] is pinned to the cloak of the epic poet.”²⁵ The first Excursus turns Borchardt’s stance, and the racial anxieties that it symptomatizes, inside out.²⁶ By exaggerating Borchardt’s arguments and rendering Odysseus into a wandering Jew, Adorno shows that he is willing to move philology one step further from its original, sanctimonious mission. “Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment” is a piece of political and cultural provocation that simultaneously takes the form of a grotesque parody. The same strategy, that of eliciting unwanted identifications, also informs another iconic philological study of Homer from the same historical moment by another philologist in exile, namely Erich Auerbach, to whom we now turn.

Mimetic Philology

Auerbach’s best-known work, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (published in Bern in 1946), was written while Auerbach was living and working in Istanbul, having been obliged to leave Germany in 1935. This was when the infamous Nuremberg racial laws came into effect, which deprived Jews of their German citizenship and removed them from government-sponsored positions. Auerbach had been a professor of Romance philology at Marburg since 1930. Suddenly, in October 1935, he was without a job. His former advisor and predecessor at Marburg, Leo Spitzer, arranged a teaching post for him at the university in Istanbul, where Jewish refugees of the collapsed German university system were being welcomed with open arms under the modernizing and Westernizing regime of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.²⁷ Auerbach

25 Adorno (1998), 39, possibly with a secondary allusion to *Der gelbe Fleck* (Anon. 1936), which documented the destruction of the Jews under the fascists and simultaneously appeared in English as *The Yellow Spot*. Borchardt contents himself with broad suggestions like “asiatisch (barbarisch)” or “orientalisch,” and with the occasional comparison to “Israel” or to “Israelite” cultural phenomena. Contrast the crudely explicit essay on the “parasitical” and irreducibly “Asiatic” Jews of classical antiquity by Oppermann (1943).

26 Borchardt’s self-denying Judaism and his flight into myth is more sympathetically drawn in a later, quite moving essay, “Charmed Language: On the Poetry of Rudolf Borchardt” (in Adorno 1991–1992, 2: 193–210).

27 See Konuk (2010).

assumed the chair of Western languages and literature in 1936. Ten years later, he emigrated to the United States, and eventually made his way to Yale.

Auerbach's experiences under fascism left their mark on his scholarship. "*Figura*," his seminal study of Christian figural readings of the Bible from Tertullian to Augustine, was Auerbach's first publication after fleeing Germany (it appeared in 1938).²⁸ At first glance, the choice of topic seems puzzling. Why would Auerbach plunge himself into a study of Christian hermeneutical practices precisely at the moment when the more radical wing of the Protestant German church was either questioning the Jewish origins of the Old Testament, or proscribing it altogether as un-German and unfit for instruction and liturgy?²⁹ Auerbach's essay is in fact an intervention into this debate. Part of its aim is to show how deeply rooted the minimization of the Old Testament was in Christian theology and its interpretive practices: the tendency was anti-Jewish from the start. (Tertullian's tract *Against the Jews* is one of Auerbach's key pieces of evidence, but not the only one by any means.) The other part of its aim is to show how the figural mode of interpretation inadvertently helped to usher in a secular view of history and of historical time: what began as an effort to efface the Jewish character of the Old Testament by reducing it to a prophetic announcement of the New Testament ended up by effacing itself. Christianity paved the way to Enlightenment. But then Enlightenment took a wrong turn and reverted to its pre-Enlightenment and supersessionist ways. This, at least, is the implication of "*Figura*," which is at once an archaeology of a prejudice and a cautionary tale. Philology here is being put in the service of a resistance to contemporary politics and ideology.³⁰

The first chapter of *Mimesis*, penned four years later, and entitled "Odysseus' Scar," is an elaboration of the same resistant philology. There, Auerbach returns to some of the same themes as in "*Figura*"—the Old Testament, the question of figural interpretation, and the issue of supersessionism. But now he introduces a new ingredient into the mix; a contrastive analysis between Homer and the Bible, and specifically between two emblematic scenes: the foot-washing scene from *Odyssey* 19, in which Odysseus' nurse, Eurycleia, spotting the scar on his thigh, recognizes the returned hero beneath the rags of his disguise; and the binding of Isaac from Genesis 22:1–18, in which Abraham obediently yet uncomprehendingly follows the command of Yaweh to sacrifice his son. Auerbach's approach is highly provocative, despite the understated manner in

28 Auerbach (2016).

29 Heschel (2008).

30 See Porter (2017).

which he goes about his reading. To begin with, he concludes that the Jewish Old Testament—and the Old Testament is for him emphatically Jewish in this chapter—is superior in every way to Homer’s epic. It is deeper, more historical, more searching, and more realistic than Homer, whose poetry Auerbach brushes aside as superficial, flat, unpenetrating, and geared for entertainment (Homer “merely [wants] to make us forget our own reality for a few hours,” 15), especially the entertainment of the patriarchal ruling elite (*Herrschen-schicht*), which is a kind of “feudal aristocracy,” and therefore removed from daily life, indeed from social life in general (Homer’s view of social reality is static and motionless, 24)—and finally, or just consequently, operative at the level of legend, myth, and harmless lies (thus resuscitating an age-old complaint about Homer being “a liar,” 13). Secondly, in praising a scene from the Old Testament for its literary and spiritual depth, one that was moreover loathed as a figural prophecy of the sacrifice of Christ at the hands of the Jews (*Mimesis*, 73), Auerbach knew that he was bound to raise hackles, not only among classicists (which he did), but especially among his pro-fascist readers.

Far from shying away from this kind of confrontation, Auerbach seems to be spoiling for it. He indexes the time of his own essay, which was “written before and during the present war (1942)” (this appears in the German original, but was removed from the English translation in 1953). He directly addresses “the history to which we are ourselves witness” and the reprehensible “behavior of individual men and groups of men at the time of the rise of National Socialism in Germany” (19). And he attacks the literature of this politicized environment, which has devolved into “slogans of propaganda,” “crude simplification,” and “the technique of legend,” which operates at the level of the “surface” only, and has supplanted the more probing inquiries of “history” (20). Astonishingly, everything that Auerbach rues about the current political situation in Germany he finds abundantly attested in Homer: superficiality, simplification, the technique of legend, the absence of depth, of historical consciousness, of any capacity for abstraction, of any sense of reality or of ethical calling, and the broad appeal to aristocratism—these are all features of Homeric epic. And everything that stands in opposition to these features—a sense of depth, of historical reach, of profound realism, of proximity to real life closer to the ground (demotic, not elitist, forms of life), and of intricate psychological and even metaphysical complexity—Auerbach finds abundantly in evidence in the Jewish Old Testament. It doesn’t take much to draw the conclusion that Auerbach would have us draw, namely that in appearing to read these two texts historically and philologically, Auerbach is in fact reading polemically and with an eye to the present. He is practicing a *counter-philology*. It is only surprising

that so few scholars have acknowledged the historical relevance and the sheer provocativeness of his essay.³¹

No reading of Homer could fail to be heavily politicized at this time, as we have seen. Nevertheless, there are a number of striking overlaps between the first Excursus of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and the first chapter of *Mimesis*, all of which point to a shared politics of reading. Indeed, by straying from his own field of Romance philology into the territory owned by the classicists, and by adopting the stance of a counter-philologist, Auerbach has already made this connection possible. Like Adorno, Auerbach is happy to manipulate the image of the received Homer that enjoyed currency at the time, and he does so, as we have seen, with a vengeance. The very same readers of Homer that Adorno identifies in his own essay—the “German neopagans and administrators of war fever” and “the contemporary archaizers”—are the kinds of readers that Auerbach could rely on to attempt to identify the principles of National Socialism with those of aristocratic Homeric epic in his essay on “Odysseus’ Scar,” and whose identification he would frustrate, offend, or simply “out” in the ways just described. If Adorno deviously confused the paradigms of received meaning by turning Odysseus into a wandering Jew and a figure of enlightenment in order to reproduce Homer as an unreadable text, which is to say as a distorting puzzle rather than as a friendly mirror (and Homer had been nothing if not a privileged, if fraught, projective mirror for German culture since the *Goethezeit*), then Auerbach was doing much the same, in his own way.

Tearing at the heart of German philology, Auerbach, like Adorno, was exposing the very soul of German classicism. Reception could not help but be political in their hands, or for anyone who dared to read them. Furthermore, like Adorno, Auerbach was playing his own intricate games with Nietzsche (or rather, with manifestly self-serving readings of Nietzsche), for instance in denying to the archaic Greeks any access to Dionysian excess, but instead constraining them, literally and almost cruelly, to the mere surface: “The general considerations which occasionally (*sic!*) occur [to the Greeks] reveal a calm acceptance of the basic facts of human existence, but with no compulsion to brood over them, still less any passionate impulse either to rebel against them or to embrace them in an ecstasy of submission” (14). Adorno goes the other way: instead of constraining the archaic Greeks with Apollonian simplicity, which is to say with the straightjacket of Winckelmannian classicism, he concedes, provisionally, their brutish, active profiles—the regressive world of fascistic

31 See Porter (2008).

mimesis—and then reveals discordant, “reactive” traits within them. Instead of simplifying his image of the bloodthirsty nobles of the archaic Homeric epic, Adorno imparts to them unwanted complications, as when he states that “the alleged authenticity of the archaic, with its principle of blood and sacrifice, is already tainted by the “bad conscience” and by “the slyness of ruling power” ([die] *Schlauheit der Herrschaft*)” who “use primeval times for self-advertising” (37; trans. adapted). In Nietzsche-speak, the nobles are being painted with reactive pigments (a move not unfamiliar to Nietzsche): the blond beast (194) turns out to be a *Beamter* who would like to imagine that he is not one,³² and, what is worse, a Jew at that—not a real Jew, to be sure, but rather its fantastically distorted image, the net effect of which is to bring out an alarming incoherence in the Nazis’ stance, namely, that “their anti-Semitism is self-hate”.³³ There are other undeniable points of contact that one could develop, were there space: their common appeal to mimesis (the theoretical concept), albeit to different ends; their invitation to mimesis (in the sense of performative identification), likewise to similar, critical ends; and their common questioning of the efficacy of enlightenment (for Auerbach, enlightenment is something one works to attain but rarely achieves, and least of all by a brute application of reason), while the reversion to barbarism from a state of civilization is an ever-present danger, a point he took from Vico;³⁴ Horkheimer held an identical view, which was likewise mediated by Vico;³⁵ and although Vico receives only a fleeting mention in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (16), traces of this Vichian insight are to be felt on every page of that work.³⁶

Adorno and Auerbach give us just two, though undeniably potent, examples of a philology that has gone into exile in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. They were hardly alone. In fact, it is questionable whether philology under the Nazis could be anything other than exilic, regardless of the form or

32 See also Adorno (1978) 96–97: “in Germany the common citizen has proved himself a blond beast.” See Porter (1998), esp. p. 169.

33 Adorno and Horkheimer (2004), 44, a quotation of Freud (1951), 148. See Horkheimer (1985–1996), 12:175.

34 See “Giambattista Vico and the Idea of Philology” (1936), in Porter (2016b), 35, the culminating and haunting final paragraph. See also *Mimesis*, 14–15.

35 See “Vico and Mythology” (1930), in Horkheimer (1987), 75: “the possibility of a relapse into barbarism is never completely excluded ...; yet under the deceptive veneer of the present we find within civilized states tensions of a kind which may well result in frightening relapses.”

36 A further key point of commonality, which would deserve to be explored, is Vico’s own reading of Homer in his *New Science* (1744).

the practitioner. Taking up a neutral stance was not an option, and academic inquiry was either marked or tainted along all points of the political spectrum. The situation in Italy was no different, as is well shown by Piovan's contribution to this volume. As a final instance, let us consider one last case study of a resistant and exilic philology, perhaps the most extreme of all.

The Philology of Everyday Life

In 1935, Victor Klemperer, a Romance philologist at the University of Dresden, was relieved of his teaching duties, along with an entire generation of German Jews. Some, like Auerbach, fled the country. Others, like Klemperer, stayed in Germany in a state of inner exile (Klemperer's wife was Aryan, which afforded him a minimum of protection). From 1933 until 1945, Klemperer kept a diary, documenting his daily life and his reflections on the turbulence around him. This was eventually published in 1995 in two massive volumes under the title, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten*. These were later translated into English as *I Will Bear Witness* and *To the Bitter End*, respectively. Alongside his diary Klemperer nurtured another, related project that was of a more focused nature. This too appeared after the war, under the title, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* ("LTI: A Philologist's Notebook," 1947). *LTI* was, so to speak, Klemperer's linguistic diary. What it documented was the changes that were rippling through the language of the Third Reich (whence the acronym, *LTI*, standing for *Lingua Tertii Imperii*), and Klemperer's reactions to them, as Germany transformed itself from a cultural powerhouse into a political monstrosity.

The book is a remarkable document—a true document of civilization that is at the same time a document of barbarism. Klemperer is a keen observer of mental and linguistic habits. Forced out of the university, where he was an accomplished scholar of modern French literature, he could not allow himself to cease to be a philologist. It was not a matter of choice, he explains. It was a question of survival. His linguistic diary served him as a "balancing pole, without which I would have fallen down a hundred times" in his reduced circumstances, now that he was a factory worker in Dresden, a Jew who was spared the fate of the gas chambers but not the ignominies of being labeled a racial underling, and who had to suffer ghettoization (he was forced to live in a *Judenhaus*, a residence designated for Jews), countless arrests, house searches, mistreatment, scorn, banishment from all libraries and from all forms of public transport, and, from September 19, 1941 (the date was etched into his memory), the "agony" of the gold star pinned to his lapel (he calls this "*Sternortur*"). Klemperer had to witness his country being turned into a machine of

violence and death. He was obliged to look on as his native tongue was being desecrated—"poisoned," he repeatedly says—and was made to wear on its face all the ugliest symptoms of German society. In short, his linguistic observations give him balance, not relief, as he sought to make sense of the incomprehensible reality around him. As each element of his former life was stripped away one layer after another, all that remained, all that he could in some sense possess, was the language around him: "From that point on the balancing pole became my essential tool, the language of the period my paramount interest."³⁷

There is much that could be said about this heroic effort and this remarkable book, but for present purposes it will suffice to notice how Klemperer is practicing philology in exile. By this we should understand not only the obvious fact that Klemperer was banished professionally and was forced into an internal exile, but also the less obvious fact that Klemperer somehow managed to transform his philological training into a device for gauging a new kind of philological object. Unable to apply philology in the way that he earlier did, he trained his discipline onto the only object that was left for him to analyze: daily life itself. He observed and analyzed the language of his fellow factory workers, his former colleagues, members of the Gestapo, Goebbels and Hitler, and fellow Jews, but also the language with which every facet of life under the Third Reich manifested itself. Nothing was off-limits. Signage, symbols, posters, ceremonies, parades, the graphic appearance of lettering, gestures and gesticulations of the hand, face, or body, expressive intonations (absent all words), and the frenetic rhythms of fanaticism. Like Adorno and Auerbach, Klemperer was using philology to penetrate into the most unspeakable layers of his historical situation.³⁸ Unlike his two peers, he was operating for the most part without the protections afforded by academic protocols. He had no books or journals to quote, except from memory. And in any case, there was nothing to footnote, nothing but snatches of conversation and visual impressions. He was flying blind. But so were they, each in his own fashion, once one looks past the formal quotations, the page and line references to the primary and secondary literature, and the sparse footnotes in Adorno and Horkheimer's case (Auerbach's *Mimesis* is defiantly free of footnotes and bibliographical references, an unheard-of move to make for a German philologist).³⁹

37 Klemperer (2000), 10.

38 The whole of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is shot through with implicit and explicit critiques of "LTI," but see pp. 134–135 for one striking overlap with Klemperer.

39 The project begun by Klemperer has since been repatriated into the more conventional

Klemperer knew this too. In 1948 Klemperer published one of the earliest reviews of a book by one of his friends and colleagues, Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*. In it, Klemperer recognizes that the conditions under which Auerbach had written his work had completely transformed the nature of that work. (It is no small irony that Klemperer had unsuccessfully applied for the same job that Auerbach eventually took in Istanbul.) Forced out of Germany and living in Istanbul, Auerbach learned to adjust. "The blinders of his discipline, obligatory until now, fell to the wayside," Klemperer writes. "Life poured directly into the confines of his specialization," namely "the dreadful life of the present in its entirety," and transformed it altogether.⁴⁰ In the wake of this shock, Auerbach discovered something entirely new and unforeseen: an awareness of an utterly different kind of experience, that of "the everyday" (the *Sprache und Dinge des Alltags*) and of the common folk, which made havoc of all classical canons of style and of stylistic analysis. (This is what Auerbach called "realism," which for him was premised on the "mingling of styles," and ultimately on their complete abandonment.⁴¹) Faced with this *novum* called reality, Auerbach realized that the customary disciplinary walls had to be demolished so that he might make free use of them all: aesthetics, history, sociology, and, naturally, philology. This did not make Auerbach any less of a *Fachgelehrter*, or a professionally-trained academic, even when he was disrupting the cherished world of the classicists with his comparison of Homer and the Bible. On the contrary, he showed himself to be more of a *Fachgelehrter* than ever before, "for he clung to his *métier* in the name of mental and spiritual freedom."⁴² Klemperer ought to have known. He had said the same things about himself and in identical language about his own war-time philological study.⁴³ The title that Klemperer gave to his review

world of academic philology. See Cancik (1998) with copious literature. Klemperer, having anticipated these new results, has himself become a footnote.

40 Klemperer (1956), 225.

41 In point of fact, Auerbach's scholarship is "exilic" from the start. His thesis about realism in this sense runs through all his writings from 1921 onwards, and especially in his book on Dante from 1929. See Porter (2016). Nevertheless, Klemperer is right to say that Auerbach's changed circumstances did heighten his awareness of the value of everyday reality.

42 "Er klammerte sich ja an sein Metier, um die seelische Freiheit zu bewahren" (Klemperer 1956, 225; emphasis added).

43 "... so war es denn buchstäblich und im unübertragen philologischen Sinn die Sprache des Dritten Reiches, woran ich mich aufs engste klammerte, und was meine Balancierstange ausmachte ... [um] die innere Freiheit zu bewahren ..." (Klemperer 1996, 17–18; emphasis added). See also Klemperer (2000), 301: "I said to myself: You hear with your own ears, and listen in on everyday life (*in den Alltag*), you listen in precisely on the everyday, the prosaic and the average, the lackluster unheroic events."

of Auerbach applied to an entire generation of scholars, himself included. It reads: "Philology in Exile."

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PART 2

Ideas



Fascist Modernity, Religion, and the Myth of Rome*

Jan Nelis

This chapter offers a general analysis of some of the central characteristics of the Fascist use of the myth and idea of Rome, of what has been termed the concept of Romanness or *romanità*. Firstly, it situates *romanità*, one of the main founding myths on which Mussolini's so-called *fabbrica del consenso* relied for more than twenty years, in the context of the study of Fascism as a political religion. Following this general treatment of the most characteristic features of *romanità*, the myth of Rome will be linked with recent scholarship on the modern nature of Fascism (and Nazism). This proposed "Fascist modernism", already briefly illustrated in the first part of the paper (Fascist architecture and aesthetics), will be traced in the activities and inner functioning of the Istituto di Studi Romani, a pivotal institution in the development of the myth and cult of Rome under Fascism. Finally, we will also use the Istituto to highlight a feature that is often neglected in the study of the Fascist use of Rome, namely the role of traditional, Catholic religion—as opposed to the idea of Fascism as a political religion.

The Myth and Cult of Rome and the Political Religion of Fascism

Since the 1970s, scholarship on Italian Fascism has witnessed a growing interest in the role played by culture under Mussolini's regime.¹ Simultaneously, following the groundbreaking and stimulating work of Renzo De Felice, a certain degree of grassroots-level consensus has been increasingly identified as crucial to Fascism's intensifying grip on Italian society over the two decades often referred to as the *ventennio fascista* (1922–1943).² This relative "success"

* The present paper synthesizes my earlier work on the Fascist myth of *romanità*. It is the result of research activities undertaken in Italy and Belgium from 2002 to the present. Among the publications that have inspired the present paper are: Nelis (2007c); Nelis (2008); Nelis (2010); Nelis (2011a); Nelis (2011b); Nelis (2012a); Nelis (2014).

1 In this context, see e.g., Griffin (2002); Nelis (2006a).

2 Cf. De Felice (1974). On the controversy surrounding the notion of consensus, see, among others, Gentile (2003).

of Fascism appears to have come about via large-scale coercion, especially in the earlier years, but also through the use of what could be termed “soft power”, a process of “manufacturing consent” through mainly cultural means.

This sustained focus on culture, now seen as vital to Fascism’s inner functioning as an ideology, has identified it as a force aimed at “revitalizing” the nation, especially in light of the chaotic and traumatizing experience of the First World War.³ Apart from a “modernism” inherent in Fascism (see below), one of the more interesting consequences of such recent “culturalist” approaches is the concept of Fascism as a “political religion”, sacralizing private and public life through both discursive (“mythical”) and aesthetic (“cultic”) means. Thus it has been identified as a *culto del littorio*, referring to one of the most striking symbols synonymous with Fascism, the Roman lictorial fasces.⁴

Along with its aesthetic constituents (mass gatherings, the visual arts, architecture, cinema, etc.),⁵ a specific discourse gradually penetrated the most diverse segments of cultural and societal life, conveying the image of a new, Fascist Self, of a renewed sense of national pride and identity. This process of “fascistization” was a direct consequence of the regime’s “totalitarian” nature, of its attempts to occupy and dominate every aspect of Italian life, particularly through its most pervasive social mechanism, the National Fascist Party (PNF).

Through the development of a vast network of leisure and youth organizations, and while also directing and supervising cultural life and the media, Fascism maintained a strong grip on society through to the end of the 1930s, when the introduction of racist laws sparked a certain degree of popular dissent.⁶ This dual process of suppressing the most basic civic liberties, supported by a “softer” yet more insidious approach to the exercise of power, enabled Mussolini to sway large parts of the population towards his cause, especially Italian youth, luring them with the promise of national rebirth or palingenesis, or renewed greatness. Within this process, “history”, mediated as a specific and detailed image of the Italian past, played a major part.

3 In this sense, a most interesting study is Falasca-Zamponi (1997). See also Gentile (1982), and, for another recent treatment of these and similar theses, Griffin (2007).

4 Cf. Gentile (1993), as well as a preliminary study published in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, Gentile (1990). For up-to-date discussions on the concept of political religion, see Griffin (2005), Roberts (2009), and Nelis (2011a).

5 For more on these aspects, see also the chapters by Arthurs, Pomeroy, Marcello and Fortuna in this volume.

6 In this context, the most complete and insightful treatment of Fascism as a form of totalitarianism, in the context of the phenomenon of a *modernità totalitaria*, is Gentile (2008a). See also Gentile (2008b).

Among the many “founding myths” of Fascism, such as those regarding its relationship to the First World War, one element stood out as key both to its quest for absolute dominion over the Italian peninsula and its historically-based self-conception and representation: the idea of present-day Italy as embodying the spirit and virtuousness of Roman (late Republican and early Imperial) antiquity, creating the image of a *Terza Roma*, of a “third,” Fascist Rome.

From the very outset of his quest for domination, and more particularly after the “March on Rome” on 28 October 1922, when thousands of Fascist *squadristi* marched on the capital, mounting a successful coup to overthrow the government, Mussolini aspired to create the image of Italy as a nation inspired and impelled by ancient Roman examples. Following the example of Julius Caesar crossing the river Rubicon in 49 BC, Mussolini portrayed the *Marcia su Roma* as having been his very own crossing of the Rubicon (although he had in fact made the trip from Milan to Rome by train).

This snapshot of the charismatic *duce* as a revolutionary “Caesarian” *condottiero* and, some years later, as a modern-day dictator still in Caesar’s image, became a primary theme of Fascist propaganda.⁷ This predominant image influenced and shaped the weaving of a widespread and intricate discursive web, with constant reference to a purported, idealized “Roman” spirit guiding the nation. This led directly to the development of a highly “ideologized” discourse on Roman antiquity.

Apart from the publicistic and academic means underpinning the propaganda surrounding antiquity,⁸ history, both ancient and contemporary, was also “written” and mediated by various non-verbal means. These latter mechanisms contributed significantly to the success of the myth or cult⁹ of what came to be known as *romanità*. One of the most basic manifestations of this gradual process of “Romanization” may seem at first glance to be rather insignificant, but from a propagandistic point of view it was arguably one of the most effective: the introduction of everyday “Roman” habits such as, primarily, the Fascist “Roman salute”. Such tendencies were notably intensified during the 1930s, when Achille Starace, *segretario* of the National Fascist Party between 1931 and 1939, was responsible for an increasing stress on the cultic, aesthetic means by which Fascism would be promoted and consolidated.

7 In this context, see Dunnett (2006) and Nelis (2012c).

8 In this context, see e.g., Cagnetta (1979), Nelis (2011b). See also Dino Piovan’s chapter in this volume.

9 Visser (1992); cf. Stone (1999).

Whereas the *passo romano* or “Roman step”, adopted by the army in the 1930s, met with a great deal of scorn, this Roman salute, portrayed as a direct reference to Roman antiquity, as well as being more hygienic than the handshake, gradually substituted traditional social behavior in this very specific domain. The salute was swiftly and successfully adopted by many. This substitution of one of the most basic and everyday gestures was a constant, simultaneously implicit and explicit, reminder of the new Fascist reality.

This “totalitarian” determination to intervene in and structure everyday life went further, redefining the notion of time itself, including various attempts to fascisticize the calendar in a “Roman” sense. Thus the “Caesarian” March on Rome became marked on the new calendar as the first day of the first year of the “Fascist era” or *era Fascista* (*E.F.*), an indication which was to be added to the traditional Gregorian calendar year. In addition, a score of official festivities were introduced or revived, including April 21, the *Natale di Roma*, the mythical founding date of the city of Rome: a fitting “Roman” and Fascist substitute for the ideologically incompatible celebration on May 1. Furthermore, the anniversary of the March on Rome became one of Italy’s major public holidays for some twenty years.

An additional way in which the dual historical narrative Fascism–*romanità* was translated in a somewhat less abstract manner than the afore-mentioned measures was the utilization of the physical remnants of antiquity, which were presented in exhibitions (see below), and which were also very tangibly present in various cities, first and foremost in the city of Rome itself. Archaeological activities in the Italian capital proved remarkably useful in creating the illusion of an ideologically specific resurrection of that “greatness” so longed for by the regime, particularly through the excavation of some of the most evocative ancient monuments.

Apart from various sites and monuments such as the Mausoleum of Augustus or Augusteo, the Ara Pacis Augustae,¹⁰ the Theater of Marcellus and the Area Sacra Argentina, the most scenographic site produced by the Fascist interest in ancient Rome was the zone divided by a large avenue stretching from what became the nerve center of Fascist Italy, Palazzo Venezia with its iconic “Mussolinian” balcony, running alongside various imperial forums, towards the quintessential symbol of ancient Rome, the Colosseum. The creation of the avenue, the Via dell’Impero—known today as the Via dei Fori Imperiali—exemplifies the selective manner in which the Fascists utilized Roman antiq-

10 In this context, see Kallis (2011); also Andersen (2003).

uity: the excavations were undertaken in a hasty and unscientific manner, with the focus clearly on the site's potential as a magnificent parade ground, rather than its immeasurable historical value.¹¹

Among the more traditional (and somewhat less obviously manipulative) ways in which the tangible remnants of ancient Rome were utilized were a number of antiquarian exhibitions. One such event stands out as by far the most notable: the bimillenary birthday exposition organized in honor of the Roman emperor Augustus in 1937–1938. On display were artifacts and casts of ancient statues, along with other more modern didactic exhibits such as elaborate scale models of some of Rome's more impressive engineering achievements—including the bridge crossing the Rhine. The *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*, a relatively “modern” exposition, grew to become one of the most visited of its kind.

As is also shown in more detail by Joshua Arthurs elsewhere in the present volume, the *Mostra* is arguably the quintessential example of the highly efficient means by which Mussolini's regime conveyed the idea of an ancient Roman revival to all strata of society.¹² Most significantly, it contained a final room in which Fascism's newly acquired imperial status was evoked. Added to this, the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*,¹³ an exposition celebrating ten years of Fascist power, first organized in 1932, was re-opened; combined with considerably reduced transport fares, this made the trip to Rome even more accessible to the wider public.

As illustrated, Fascism's intent was that antiquity and modernity should be perceived, if not as one organic whole, then at least as distinctly interconnected. In the context of the importance of *romanità* to Fascist aesthetics, it is furthermore essential to comment briefly on the importance of *romanità* to Fascist architecture, a subject developed in greater detail by Flavia Marcello elsewhere in the present volume. Indeed, this discipline and practice was highly responsive to the regime's romance with antiquity, a sensitivity that translated itself into the conception of a specific style of architectural classicism, generally referred to as *stile littorio*. This “stripped” (neo-)classicism,¹⁴ presenting a particular, highly recognizable blend of art deco, modern, functional-

11 For archaeology under Fascism, see Cederna (1979); Manacorda and Tamassia (1985); Baxa (2010); Kallis (2012); Arthurs (2012).

12 On the *Mostra Augustea*, see the very well-documented monograph by Scriba (1993), as well as Scriba (1996).

13 On this exposition, see the excellent article by Stone (1993).

14 Nelis (2007b), 408.

ist and ancient Roman influences, could be observed in a host of (mostly representative) buildings, first and foremost in the nation's capital.¹⁵

Apart from the Città Universitaria, the iconic campus of Rome's "la Sapienza" University situated in the city center, and the Stadio dei Marmi on the Foro Mussolini (today the Foro Italico) to the north of the capital, the most renowned and, arguably, workable product of Fascist architecture and town-planning is the well preserved *EUR* quarter, situated to the south. Originally conceived as the site of the universal exposition which had been proposed for 1942, this project was completed after the demise of Fascism. However, some parts of the complex and its buildings date back to the 1930s, including the iconic Palazzo della Civiltà del Lavoro. This particular structure, popularly referred to as the Colosseo quadrato ("square Colosseum"), embodies the most vibrant architectural translation of Fascism's two-decade long quest to represent and insert antiquity into its own, ultimately disastrous, pursuit of renewed imperial splendor.

Romanità and/versus Totalitarian Modernity

As previously mentioned, during the past few years, the study of Fascism has focused on the inherent value of "culture" for understanding Fascism as a phenomenon. As a consequence, at the level of the study of Fascist mythology it is now possible to analyze *romanità* not only as an ornamental, a rhetorical or aesthetic propaganda instrument, but also as an integral part of Fascist reality. In contrast with the opinion of scholars such as Quartermaine, who, when describing the afore-mentioned *EUR* city quarter, quite reductively defined *romanità* as "rhetoric alone",¹⁶ even as early as 1980, Cofrancesco made the following observation:

In the interwar period, the myth of Rome intensifies its *rhetorical* characteristics, but much remains to be said regarding this concept. Indeed, if rhetoric signifies grandiloquent forms that conceal spiritual contents that are rather poor and incentives towards action that are rather soft, then it is altogether incorrect to define the Fascist idea of Rome as rhetoric, as the latter idea comes down to an attitude towards sacrifice, a determined

15 On the corresponding "carcass classicism" prevalent in the architecture of the Third Reich, see Whyte's chapter in this volume.

16 Quartermaine (1995), 213.

will to make the rights of those who represent it prevail. Thus by explicitly and consciously referring to the myth of Rome Fascism did not dig up a lifeless corpse, but tried to construct its own legitimacy, which it based on an ideal patrimony that was not yet completely exhausted, and thus susceptible to meet new needs—and illusions—rising from the turbulence of war and the chaos of the postwar situation.¹⁷

In other words, one should not deny the highly rhetorical nature of the Fascist myth of Rome; rather, this characteristic, namely the importance of rhetoric, both in the sense of *romanità* as rhetoric and in the sense of the rhetoric of *romanità*, should lie at the heart of any sound analysis of this phenomenon. This is also the opinion of Visser, author of the aforementioned milestone study on *romanità*, as well as of Leca and Chiapparò.¹⁸ The latter notably highlighted the great strength and continuity of *romanità* since the period of the Risorgimento, as well as linking it with the heritage of the French Revolution, and with the phenomenon of the “nationalization of the masses”, as analyzed by Gentile and above all by Mosse.¹⁹

Indeed, the myth of Rome was a major cultural matrix of Fascist ideology—insofar as this latter concept applies to Fascist thought—a crucial catalyst of the intended creation of the so-called Fascist *uomo nuovo* or “new man”, who in his turn was to create the *Stato nuovo*, the “new State”.²⁰ It was not only a recycling of or a return to the past, but also, and above all, a projection of the past, a source of inspiration, of physical and mental designs, onto the present, and onto the future.²¹ In line with recent scholarship by Griffin,²² among others, it could be argued that both Fascism and *romanità* were inherent parts of modernity. Opposed to mainstream interwar political and intellectual culture, in a sense, they constituted alternative responses to the crisis provoked by modernity. Indeed, it seems that *romanità* can be very much characterized as “a highly particular encounter with modernity”.²³

Furthermore, the “modern quality which Fascism added to the combination of older erudite and cultic traditions”²⁴ does not only seem to identify *roman-*

17 Cofrancesco (1980), 404–405.

18 Visser (1992); Leca (1996), 441; Chiapparò (2002).

19 Mosse (1989).

20 Gentile (1982).

21 In this context, see Giardina and Vauchez (2000), 212–296.

22 Griffin (2007).

23 Belardelli (2002), 340.

24 Scriba (1996), 25.

ità as a constitutive part of what could in this sense be termed “Fascist modernism”, but it also points to the highly efficient and modern means by which the myth of Rome was being propagated. The propagandistic, sociological value of Fascist *romanità* did not only reside in academic and popularizing publications dedicated to the bimillenary celebrations of, first and foremost, Virgil (1930),²⁵ Horace (1935),²⁶ and Augustus (1937–1938)²⁷ or to the general notion of empire,²⁸ but also, and above all, in the “modern” means by which this propaganda was organized and orchestrated, some of which have already been briefly mentioned. Apart from the highly efficient introduction of “Roman” symbols such as the *fasci littori* and the Roman salute, of the *Natale di Roma* (April 21) as a national holiday, and of the Fascist calendar which started with the March on Rome, of latinizing words such as *dux* and, generally, of “Roman” symbolism,²⁹ *romanità* was also very much present in popular press and literature, radio broadcasts, cinema,³⁰ school textbooks,³¹ stamps,³² sports,³³ the visual arts,³⁴ and so on. Indeed it seems that virtually no part of the cultural field was immune to the idea of a spiritual, and material, heritage of Roman antiquity, a situation that reached a crescendo as the regime tightened its grip on the Italian peninsula.³⁵

The development of *romanità*, which was a central myth that accompanied the afore-mentioned *culto del littorio*, was first of all a bottom-up phenomenon, in that it was initially the work of individual actors, and only secondly the result of a well-defined and -elaborated grand governmental design. One such “actor”, and arguably the most important and representative case study in the context of *romanità*, is the *Istituto di Studi Romani*, currently the *Istituto Nazionale di Studi Romani*, which was founded in 1925 by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi. For the entire *ventennio*, the *Istituto* was responsible for the development and organization,

25 On the bimillenary celebration of Virgil, see Faber (1983), Canfora (1985).

26 On the bimillenary celebration of Horace, see Cagnetta (1990); Citti (1992); Cagnetta (1998).

27 See Arthurs' contribution to this volume on the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*.

28 Cf. Cagnetta (1979); Kopff (2000); Nelis (2012b).

29 In this context, see Stone (1999), Chiapparò (2002).

30 In this context, see Wyke (1997), Wyke (1999). See also the contribution by Arthur J. Pomeroy in this volume.

31 See for example Piacentini (1964); Ambrosoli (1991).

32 On *romanità* and the Fascist interest in stamps, see Schumacher (1988).

33 In this context, see e.g., Brice (1991), Aicher (2000).

34 Cf. the excellent Malvano Bechelloni (2003).

35 In this context, see the somewhat divergent opinion put forward by Visser (2001), 111.

ideological and material, of the cult—to be read in the original, Latin sense, *cultus*—of Rome, ancient, Fascist, and even Papal (see below).

Even if the *Istituto* would only reach the apex of its activities and influence during the second half of the 1930s, the essence of its role and orientation remained relatively unaltered since the first issue of the journal *Roma* was published in 1923, preceding the foundation of the *Istituto* itself: the diffusion of knowledge concerning Rome, the city, its history and culture, from its mythical date of foundation until the present. From the very beginning, it was clear that, rather than a “spontaneous convergence”³⁶ between the regime and the *Istituto*, it was the *Istituto* itself which proactively aligned its initiatives with the regime’s cultural and identitarian politics. The relationship between both was “both ideal and organizational”;³⁷ Galassi Paluzzi’s words indicate this most unmistakably:

Today, while on this hill [...] is inaugurated the new seat of an institution which in the name and love of Rome has wished to create and has succeeded in creating [...] a doctrinal fortress of Romanness [...] we think of the beginnings of our Institution that were so small, so poor and difficult, and we think back to the small room [...] in which in the faraway but nearby year 1922 we have—with certain faith—drawn up the plan of an undertaking that has in part already been realized and that starting today will be realized with the same faith, with the same organic methodicity and the same persevering love [...] And let me repeat that we are conscious of the fact that we are but mere instruments in a grand design that transcends us; that we consider ourselves to be a militia, a learned weapon [...] in the service of the King, obeying the Duce, aimed at the victorious rebirth of the idea of Rome. [...] Today I feel the need to confirm once more our determination to march on, and advance, in the battle that was assigned to us, so that in the new order the old and eternal truths of the Rome of the Caesars, of Christian Rome, of Savoy Rome, and of Rome of the Lictor, can triumph.³⁸

These words were issued on the occasion of the inauguration of the brand new seat of the *Istituto* on Rome’s Aventine hill in May 1941. They leave no doubt as to the *Istituto*’s ideological orientation: the idea of culture as a “battlefield”, the

36 La Penna (2001), 89.

37 Vittoria (2002), 509.

38 Document containing speech held in the historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari generali, busta 11, fasc. 25. The speech was also published in the journal *Roma*: Galassi Paluzzi (1941).

idea of a “march” and a “new order”, the “small room” that evokes the so-called Milanese *covo* where Mussolini had his offices before his rise to power,³⁹ and, most significantly, the fact that the year 1922, and not 1923 or 1925 (see above) is mentioned: all this clearly identifies the *Istituto* as a Fascist institution, born under Fascism, and at the service of Fascism.

Apart from its outspoken political nature, the *Istituto* was also a highly modern organization, developing an extremely methodical and efficient program of cultural activism. The author of a series of writings dedicated to the organization of museums and expositions,⁴⁰ Galassi Paluzzi was from the very beginning a tireless advocate and “propagator” of *romanità*, even if at times he obtained only minor results. The *Istituto*’s “entrepreneurial modernity” is exemplified by its vast scholarly and popularizing written output during the entire *ventennio*,⁴¹ of which the traces can be followed in the *Istituto*’s historical archives, as well as in Rome’s Central State Archives (*Archivio Centrale dello Stato*), where several folders contain, among other things, the correspondence between Galassi Paluzzi, Mussolini’s private secretariate (the *segreteria particolare del duce*),⁴² and the Ministry of Popular Culture (*Miniculpop*).⁴³ The files held in these archives document the considerable diplomatic and entrepreneurial skills of Galassi Paluzzi and his organization, skills that he used to promote a “true methodological discourse of cultural organization”,⁴⁴ Furthermore, they clearly show that, while the regime “instrumentalized” the *Istituto*’s activities and output on several occasions, the initiative more often lay with Galassi Paluzzi himself, or with one or more of his collaborators.

One of numerous episodes that can serve to illustrate the *Istituto*’s insatiable cultural activism and interest in the organization and propagation of (Fascist) culture, are the negotiations with the leisure organization *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND) for the publication of a book series on the theme of *Roma Mater*. Not surprisingly, the initiative of publishing a series of books with the intent to deliver a “work of effective diffusion, among the people, of the story and glory of Rome [...] for the cultural and spiritual elevation of the Italian peo-

39 In this context, see also Visser (1994), 48.

40 Cf. Galassi Paluzzi (1921a); Galassi Paluzzi (1921b); Galassi Paluzzi (1922).

41 For a description, see Vittoria (2002), 521–537.

42 Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Segreteria particolare del duce, carteggio ordinario, busta 509.217/1, busta 509.217/11, busta 552.007.

43 Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Minculpop, Gabinetto, busta 71, fasc. 473, busta 207.

44 Vittoria (2002), 516.

ple",⁴⁵ in "a simple and easily understandable form which makes the important themes that are treated accessible and comprehensible to the working-class masses, which are the main target public of these small books",⁴⁶ was for the greater part Galassi Paluzzi's. Still, intense collaboration ensued, whereby the OND suggested the topics to be treated, and Galassi Paluzzi the authors: Roberto Paribeni on *Empire*, Giulio Quirino Giglioli on *Rome from the World War to the New Empire of Fascist Rome*, Salvatore Riccobono on *Roman Law and Civilization*, Francesco Saverio Grazioli on *The Great Roman Conquerors*, Emilio Lavagnino on *Graphic and Figurative Arts in Rome from Antiquity to Our Days*, and Paolo Orano on *Rome and Fascism*.⁴⁷ Paluzzi's interest in cultural organization was constant; indeed, it did not even cease in the spring of 1943, when it was clear that Fascist Italy's days were numbered: in March of that year, Paluzzi asked Mussolini for 80 thousand lira "for the creation of a 'Library of organizational methodology of cultural activities' at the Royal Institute of Roman Studies". In spite of the intense war effort, the *duce* granted this final request to the *Istituto*.⁴⁸

There is no room here to go into the many other initiatives, popular as well as scholarly, that were undertaken by the *Istituto* in its "organization" of various aspects of the myth of Rome. However, one such event particularly stands out in the context of the modern way in which the *Istituto* functioned: the organization of a *convegno augusteo* which took place, in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, from 23–27 September 1938, at the conclusion of the year of the aforementioned bimillenary celebration of Augustus. This conference was not what it might seem at first sight; it was in fact not a "Congress in the strict, classical sense of the word",⁴⁹ to put it in the words of Galassi Paluzzi. Indeed, rather than organizing a traditional conference (papers, sessions, etc.),⁵⁰ the *Istituto* opted for a more general cultural event, which was of a highly ceremonial, ideo-

45 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Pietro Capoferri, president of the OND, 7 October 1940, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 160, fasc. 2.

46 C. Puccetti, *direttore generale* of the OND, to Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, 29 November 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 160, fasc. 2.

47 Galassi Paluzzi to the *Direzione Generale* of the OND, 5 July 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 160, fasc. 2.

48 Note for Mussolini by Nicolò de Cesare, Mussolini's *segretario particolare*, 11 March 1943, Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Segreteria particolare del *duce*, carteggio ordinario, busta 509.217/11.

49 Galassi Paluzzi to Giuseppe Bottai, 3 June 1938, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Archivio Generale, serie Congressi Convegni Mostre, anni 1927–1999, busta 220, fasc. 58.

50 This seems to have been the intention as late as September 1937; cf. letter by Galassi Paluzzi

logical and political nature. Most significantly, it included a field trip to Campania, and a ceremony in front of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (recently reconstructed with the help of the *Istituto*), where a delegation was also received by none other than Mussolini.

The *convegno* was officially a joint initiative, organized by the *Istituto* and Giulio Quirino Giglioli's *Museo dell'Impero*, but in reality it was almost entirely the *Istituto*'s responsibility. It could count on the presence of no less than 300 participants—some accompanied by their wives and children—and, as Galassi Paluzzi observed, it had to assume “the high significance of a homage of International Science to the figure and work of Augustus”, in “recognition of the contribution of the Empire of Rome to the development of civilization.”⁵¹

Apart from the field-trip, which was referred to as the *gita campana*, the *convegno* also involved ceremonies in Rome, making it a highly public, publicized and openly political event. It dominated the *Istituto*'s agenda at the time of the *bimillenario* and for months beforehand, as is clear from the thousands of letters and other documents that can be consulted in the *archivio storico*.

From the archival sources held at the *Istituto* there thus emerges the image of an extremely prolific, indeed unique, cultural body.⁵² In the context of the *convegno*, such sources, combined with those held at the Galassi Paluzzi family home in Grottaferrata, allow for a meticulous reconstruction of nearly every aspect of the Institute's activities, treating not only its development and promotion of a scientific discourse on Rome, but also more practical, logistical issues such as hotel, transport and meal reservations. From a political and financial point of view, the correspondence with various Ministries is once more highly revealing of the energy and decisiveness with which Galassi Paluzzi, as well as other members of the *Istituto*, dedicated themselves to their mission.

As such, the *convegno* is the perfect illustration of the modern, didactic character of Galassi Paluzzi's concept of culture and propaganda. As previously mentioned, the logistics of the event were handled in an expert way, but on top of that, there was also a *busta dello studioso* (“scholar's folder”), containing both didactic and practical information. This folder was handed to participants

to Bottai, 7 September 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Archivio Generale, serie Congressi Convegni Mostre, anni 1927–1999, busta 220, fasc. 58.

51 Galassi Paluzzi to Bottai, 7 September 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Archivio Generale, serie Congressi Convegni Mostre, anni 1927–1999, busta 220, fasc. 58.

52 All archival sources referring to the *convegno* can be found in the historical archives of the *Istituto*, Archivio Generale, serie Congressi Convegni Mostre, anni 1927–1999, buste 209–239, 289.

at the beginning of the *convegno*, but it had been prepared as early as 1932, no less than six years before the actual event. If the existence of the *busta*, of which a number have been stockpiled in the *Istituto's* archives, seems anything but surprising now, this was hardly the case in the 1930s. It further exemplifies the fact that, under Fascism, the use of antiquity was far from innocent, intent at reaching a public that was both academic and less high-brow, telling the story of ancient Rome's (supposed) resurgence in twentieth-century Italy.

Pope and/or Duce? *Romanità* and Catholic Religion

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that *romanità* was not only a “pagan” concept, but that it was also intimately linked to Christianity and Catholicism—as I have shown in a previous paper, using a wide selection of writings produced under Fascism by historians, archaeologists and classicists.⁵³ Indeed, Rome was not only mythicized in the context of the afore-mentioned Fascist political religion, but also in its relation to traditional, Catholic religion. As such—and this observation also counts for Italian society as a whole—*romanità* had a double identity: Fascist, and Catholic.

As was also the case with “Fascist modernism” (see above), this “baptism” of antiquity was particularly visible in the *Istituto di Studi Romani*. The latter thus “played the game” of the Vatican as well as that of the regime, in its publications and in the discourse which it conveyed, as well as in its actions and networking activities. Let us begin by taking a closer look at the founder, Galassi Paluzzi. Having converted to Catholicism in 1912–1915,⁵⁴ Galassi Paluzzi was a specialist on Christian Rome, with a particular interest in Roman church buildings.⁵⁵ Thus it should come as no surprise that in almost all of his writings dedicated to the subject of pagan Rome, this latter period is depicted as an “imperfect” precursor of Catholic Rome. This was increasingly the case since the 1929 *Conciliazione*, the term commonly used to refer to the official agreements between Church and State. In a paper written for the occasion of this event, we find the idea of a renewal of Italy, inspired by both Fascist ideology and Catholic doctrine:⁵⁶

53 Nelis (2007a).

54 Handwritten note by Gina Dallolio, wife of Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, Grottaferrata, Galassi Paluzzi private archives.

55 In this context, see his bibliography in Coccia (2000), 27–112.

56 See also the volume *Rome where Christ is Roman* (*Roma “onde Cristo è romano”*)—Galassi Paluzzi (1937); also Galassi Paluzzi (1938).

It sufficed [...] that a Man of genius, a Hero, thought, and wanted, and acted again in a Latin way, and that he finally heard the sober Roman word, which in vain the Vicars of Christ on Earth had directed towards other non-Latins. To us, as soldiers with unfailing faith in our Leaders, and who never abandoned our deep faith in the Holy Father, even when this meant danger and maybe also defeat—and never, even when in an extremely sad hour many doubted and despaired, did they abandon their indestructible faith in the Duce's providential mission—today's victory is sweet as if it were our own. With our belief in God and in the divinity of the eternal Church, master of truth, supreme lawgiver of an order that is proportionate to man's supranational mission; convinced that Fascism represents the renewed capacity of Rome's civic power through renewed social order, we praise God, who has let us see such wonders, dreamt by the great spirit and fantasy of Dante: Rome as a ruler of souls, a guiding principle of peoples.⁵⁷

While no direct reference to antiquity is made here, one year later, the opposite is the case: at the occasion of the bimillenary celebration of Virgil, the idea of the poet as a precursor and prophet of Christ was voiced by many authors, including for example Emilio Bodrero, a politician and a scholar of antiquity who can be considered one of the main protagonists of the propaganda surrounding *romanità*,⁵⁸ as well as by Galassi Paluzzi himself. Referring to Virgil's *latinitas*, Galassi Paluzzi linked the ancient poet to Catholic writers Dante Alighieri (see above) and Alessandro Manzoni, in an explicit reference to the ruling *entente cordiale* between Church and regime:

We thank Divine Providence which has allowed us to see the realization, in these times, of the prophecy of the last great son of Italy, Virgil, through faith, through the genius of the Pope who rules the fate of the Church, and thanks to the wonderful Latin Man who today is in charge of the fate of our Fatherland.⁵⁹

Apart from a 1943 volume edited by Galassi Paluzzi, reproducing a series of speeches and writings by Pius XII on the idea of Rome,⁶⁰ another important

57 Galassi Paluzzi (1929), 32.

58 The papers Bodrero published in the journal *Roma* on the subject of Virgil: Bodrero (1929); Bodrero (1930).

59 Galassi Paluzzi (1930), 488.

60 Galassi Paluzzi (1943).

publication by the *Istituto* in the context of the baptism of Roman antiquity is the afore-mentioned *Roma "onde Cristo è romano"*,⁶¹ especially since it explicitly developed the idea of pagan Rome as a *praeparatio* of Christian Rome. Apart from Galassi Paluzzi himself,⁶² the volume contained contributions by a series of high-ranking members of the Roman and Italian clergy such as Pietro Tacchi Venturi,⁶³ Pirro Scavizzi,⁶⁴ Pio Paschini,⁶⁵ and Eugenio Pacelli, who was none other than the future pope Pius XII.⁶⁶ Whereas this book, whose title refers to a verse by Dante (*Purgatory*, c. 32, v. 102), intends to underline the value of the concept of *praeparatio*, at the same time this latter concept is being questioned, at least to some extent. This can be observed in individual contributions, which seem to avoid overstressing the importance of *praeparatio*—an attitude they share with some contemporary Italian Catholic intellectuals—but also, for example, in the correspondence between authors and the *Istituto*.

An interesting episode in this context involves Francesco Borgongini Duca, Vatican *Nuncio Apostolico* in Italy, and Galassi Paluzzi. When revising Borgongini Duca's paper,⁶⁷ Galassi had suggested that the latter stress the intimate link between Roman antiquity and Catholicism.⁶⁸ Opposed to this maneuver, to this far-reaching "assimilation" between ancient and Catholic Rome, Borgongini replied to Galassi:

Catholicism, the Catholic idea, in no way derives from the Roman idea of imperial universalism, but has been revealed by God since the beginning of humanity. The Catholic concept is intimately linked to all human beings in Christ the Redeemer [...]. In the imperial idea all that is not Roman is barbaric, and should be forcefully subjugated. Thus it should come as no surprise that between Catholicism and the Roman Empire such a huge war broke out, because the Catholic idea revolutionized Roman legal conceptions.⁶⁹

61 Istituto di Studi Romani (1937).

62 Galassi Paluzzi (1937).

63 Tacchi Venturi (1937).

64 Scavizzi (1937).

65 Paschini (1937).

66 Pacelli (1937).

67 Borgongini Duca (1937).

68 Galassi Paluzzi to Borgongini Duca, 1 June 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 37.

69 Francesco Borgongini Duca to Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, 8 June 1937, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 37.

As with many other scholars and propagandists who collaborated with the *Istituto*, Galassi Paluzzi saw his activities as the result of some kind of divine mission. Indeed, the *Istituto's* emblem in itself already hinted at such an orientation, since it contained both an eagle and a cross. In moments of national or international crisis, or in their aftermath, this religious orientation became even more outspoken. Thus the Institute's mission was interpreted as some sort of crusade of the Latin, Catholic West against the barbarian, pagan, atheist East, which Rome was to "civilize" by converting it to Catholicism, and to Fascism. This can be observed, for example, in the following text on the *romanità* of (Eastern) Africa, where the regime had conquered an empire in the mid-1930s:

And thus, looking to fulfill its duty to scientifically promote the glories of Rome, the Institute of Roman Studies has tried and tries—within the limits of its means and objectives—to make a meaningful contribution to a better knowledge of the ancient and new signs of civilization that Rome in every century has given to Africa with the Sword, with Law and with the Cross, and that it now once more gives under the imperial signs of the Lictor.⁷⁰

This kind of message would be repeated near the end of the 1930s, in the face of global conflict. Here the war situation was linked to the triad antiquity–religion–Fascism: "War, pious, just, necessary (as Rome taught us that war should be), war that Italy is engaging in and will win, is a logical development, as the Duce said, of the Fascist Revolution; in war there is continuity of intentions and spirit with our trimillennarian history."⁷¹

As the institution's prime mover, Galassi Paluzzi also launched a series of initiatives that were directly linked to Catholicism. In this context, there was, for example, the creation, at the *Istituto*, in all discretion, of a program that proposed prayer for scholarship; Galassi referred to this initiative as the work (*opera*) of "science and faith". The evolution of this initiative is documented by files held in the archives of the *Istituto*,⁷² as well as at the Galassi Paluzzi family home (in the form of correspondence and handwritten notes by Galassi Paluzzi and his wife). In line with our observations regarding the *Istituto's* activities as a "crusade" for Western, Latin and Catholic civilization, when consulting the files

⁷⁰ Galassi Paluzzi (1936), 424.

⁷¹ Galassi Paluzzi (1940), 166.

⁷² In this context, see historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219, busta 220.

on the *Opera* we encounter a similar idea, that of an apostolic struggle whose participants were to act as “troops participating in a siege or assault.”⁷³

The first year in which we encounter the idea of the creation of the *Opera* “of Prayer for those who study” (*di Preghiera per coloro che studiano*) is 1928.⁷⁴ It was then “officially” launched in 1929, not insignificantly the same year as the *Conciliazione*. Galassi Paluzzi wanted to stimulate prayer for the *Istituto*, but also for scholars in general, whom he saw as people “in search of Truth”. With this goal in mind, he created, at the *Istituto*, a special directorial committee mainly consisting of regular collaborators of the *Istituto* such as Carlo Cecchelli, Pio Paschini, Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta and Carlo Bricarelli.⁷⁵ Galassi Paluzzi was secretary of this committee, and as secretary he sent an enormous number of circular letters to Catholic congregations in Italy and abroad, asking them to pray, without interruption, for scholarship. In the letters he asked, among other things, for prayer

for all those who study, and this with the specific intention to offer help, of a supernatural nature, to the difficult task imposed upon those who study, and with the similarly specific intention to offer this supernatural help so that those who study, while defeating the various difficulties with which they are confronted, can always direct their efforts towards the triumph of the Truth, without succumbing to those many forms of egoism and pride that the acquisition of knowledge easily engenders. On the other hand—and this is our second fundamental proposition—we asked that the Congregationalists would intensively and charitably pray for an academic Institution (the Institute of Roman Studies) whose main objective it is to guarantee the triumph of truth, through stimulating the knowledge of the treasures Providence wanted Rome to distribute in all fields to stimulate the development of civilization. I also added to this the hope that the congregationalists would pray for the Director of this Institute, who is in great need of help of a supernatural nature.⁷⁶

73 Undated report by Galassi Paluzzi, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

74 Handwritten note by Gina Dallolio, wife of Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, Grottaferrata, Galassi Paluzzi private archives.

75 Circular letter by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, 31 July 1929, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

76 Circular letter, January 1934, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

Apparently the *Opera*'s beginnings were rather modest, but, in 1932, an event whose precise nature is unclear boosted the initiative's success.⁷⁷ From now on, its evolution can be followed in close detail. Thus we know that the *Opera* was presented to Pius XI in 1933,⁷⁸ May 1935,⁷⁹ January 1936,⁸⁰ and April 1939;⁸¹ it also obtained the support of Milanese cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, a central figure in Catholic, and Fascist, Italy.⁸² Thus the *Opera* brought the *Istituto* into closer contact with important ecclesiastical hierarchs, including three (future) popes, namely Pius XI, Pius XII and Paul VI; Galassi Paluzzi had the most intimate relationship with Giovanni Battista Montini, who was to become pope Paul VI in 1963.⁸³ Finally, proof of the enormous importance which Galassi Paluzzi attached to the *Opera* can be found in the fact that he continued to sponsor the initiative until his death in 1972, as a private citizen—he was removed as head of the *Istituto* at the fall of the regime.

A final relevant initiative in this context is the creation, in 1944, in the midst of global conflict, of a committee dedicated to the theme of "Christian Rome" (*Roma Cristiana*), a committee that intended to stimulate knowledge regarding the Christian heritage of Rome, and Italy. The idea for the creation of this committee was born in 1936,⁸⁴ but it took several years until Galassi Paluzzi obtained the necessary support, logistic and financial, to put it in place. It was to become the overarching structure within which all Christianity-related initiatives were to find an appropriate niche, with the intention of "[coordinating] all the initiatives by the Institute regarding the Christian nature of the civilization and history of Rome, in order to assure a unified criterion that would structure such initiatives, and guarantee a sure, Catholic doctrinal

77 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta, 19 April 1932, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

78 Mentioned in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23–24 January 1933.

79 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to the Madre Superiore del Carmelo di Torpignattara, 22 May 1935, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

80 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to the Madre Superiore del Carmelo di Riparazione, 9 January 1936, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

81 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to G.B. Montini, *Segretario di Stato* of pope Pius XII, 31 July 1939; reply by Montini, 19 August 1939, Grottaferrata, Galassi Paluzzi private archives.

82 Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta, 12 October 1929, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 219.

83 Cf. a series of letters held at Grottaferrata, Galassi Paluzzi private archives.

84 Report of the first reunion of the directorial committee of *Roma Cristiana*, 20 January 1944, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 29, also in historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 81, fasc. 31.

basis". In the words of Celso Costantini, Vatican delegate, *Roma Cristiana* was to be "an apostolic work".⁸⁵

The publicistic activities of the committee, which attached great importance to, among other things, the use of the Latin language as a weapon for the "reconquest" of society against "anti-Catholic delatinization",⁸⁶ continued after the war, when the *Istituto* caused all possible echoes of former Fascist rhetoric, which was now taboo, to disappear.⁸⁷ As such, created at a time when the regime was inexorably heading towards its downfall, *Roma Cristiana* exemplifies the way in which, after the dissolution of Fascism, and with it the disappearance of that bombastic nationalist rhetoric that had appropriated ancient Roman greatness, Catholic Rome was to fill the identitarian void. History has shown that to some extent it did so, at least for a time.

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85 Report of the first reunion of the directorial committee of *Roma Cristiana*, 20 January 1944, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 29, also in historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 81, fasc. 31.

86 Proposal by S. Ecc. Mons. Ruffini, report of the first reunion of the directorial committee of *Roma Cristiana*, 20 January 1944, historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 29, also in historical archives of the *Istituto*, Affari Generali, busta 81, fasc. 31.

87 In this context, see the document on *riesame critico del concetto di romanità* ("critical re-examination of the concept of Romanness"), historical archives of the *Istituto*, Pubblicazioni, busta 314, fasc. 37.

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Bathing in the Spirit of Eternal Rome: The Mostra Augustea della Romanità*

Joshua Arthurs

From October 2013 to February 2014, Rome's Scuderie del Quirinale museum hosted *Augusto*, an exhibition celebrating the two-thousandth anniversary of the emperor Augustus' death. According to its organizers, *Augusto* presented the "dazzling personal story" of this remarkable individual, offering visitors "the opportunity to track the life and career of the *princeps* in parallel with the development of a new artistic culture and vocabulary that is still today the very foundation stone of Western civilization."¹ The city administration also began restoring the Mausoleum of Augustus, which, due to structural deterioration, had been off-limits to visitors for years.² The bimillennial celebrations were not confined to Italy, with commemorations organized from Australia to Croatia to the United States. The British Virgin Islands—not generally considered a hotbed of Roman culture—even issued a coin to mark the occasion.³

To informed observers, these events invariably recalled an earlier—and, in the words of Sir Ronald Syme, "memorable and alarming"—Augustan bimillenary:⁴ that of the emperor's birth, celebrated by Benito Mussolini's Fascist regime in 1937–1938. During the *Bimillenario Augusteo*, the Italian state sponsored initiatives that included the first excavation of the Mausoleum of Augustus, as well as other monuments around Italy; international congresses and scholarly publications; historical radio programs and newsreels; and a series of postage stamps featuring Augustan images and quotations. The centerpiece,

* Portions of this chapter are adapted from Arthurs (2012). Thanks to Dr. Clotilde D'Amato and the personnel of the Museo della Civiltà Romana for their assistance with the archives of the Mostra Augustea della Romanità.

1 "Scuderie Del Quirinale—Augusto," last accessed 17 March 2014, <http://english.scuderiequirinale.it/categorie/exhibition-augusto-rome>.

2 Tom Kington, "Augustus Rules Again as Rome Acts to Restore Lost Mausoleum," *The Observer*, 29 March 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/29/augustus-rome-lost-mausoleum>.

3 For a full list of Augustan bimillenary activities, see <http://augustus2014.com>.

4 Syme (1937), 194.

though, was the Mostra Augustea della Romanità [Augustan Exhibition of *Romanità* (“Roman-ness” or “Romanity”), MAR], a vast archaeological exhibition at which, as one of its promotional slogans put it, the masses could “bathe in the spirit of Eternal Rome.” Comprising all three floors of Rome’s Palazzo delle Esposizioni, more than eighty installations, and over three thousand artifacts—significantly, all casts, replicas and scale models—it was announced as “the grandest and most convincing expression” of the rebirth of the Roman spirit under Fascism and the “continuity and greatness of our race.”⁵

The Mostra Augustea, and the 1937–1938 bimillenary as a whole, is generally identified as the apex of the regime’s identification with, and exaltation of, classical antiquity.⁶ The “myth of Rome” had been a key component of Fascist ideology since the movement’s foundation in 1919—as seen in its adoption of symbols like the *fascio littorio* [lictors’ *fascēs*] and the She-Wolf, or the organization of the blackshirted militia into centuries and maniples. For much of the 1920s and early 1930s, though, the regime had embraced a policy of cultural and aesthetic pluralism, encompassing, for example, both classicism and the virulent anti-historicism of the Milanese Futurists.⁷ By 1935, however, Mussolini’s regime had entered a new phase. Internationally, this entailed an assertion of militarism and imperial expansionism, as witnessed by Italy’s conquest of Ethiopia (1935–1936), its intervention in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), and its rapprochement with Nazi Germany, culminating in the 1939 Pact of Steel. Belligerence abroad was paralleled by radicalization at home. To reinvigorate the moribund “Fascist Revolution,” the regime initiated a campaign to stamp out “bourgeois” habits (like replacing the handshake with the “Roman salute”) and then, in November 1938, enacted the anti-Semitic Racial Laws.⁸

Against this backdrop, the Fascist invocation of imperial Rome—and Augustus in particular—is often read as an indicator of the regime’s increasingly aggressive orientation, and of the hegemony of the classical tradition over more eclectic intellectual and aesthetic influences.⁹ Correspondingly, the Mostra Augustea is framed largely as a propagandistic exercise, a cynical exploitation of history, and a mechanism for the “sacralization” or “aestheticization” of politics—that is, as a site of political ritual and mass mobilization.¹⁰ Without

5 Pallottino (1937), 519.

6 On *romanità* more generally, see Arthurs (2012), Nelis (2007), Visser (1992), Cagnetta (1976), and Canfora (1976); also Nelis in this volume.

7 On Fascist cultural policies, see especially Stone (1998).

8 On this “radicalized” phase, see for example De Grand (2004) and Knox (2000).

9 See Stone (1999).

10 See for example Marcello (2011) and Scriba (1996).

seeking to valorize what was indeed conceived as an instrument of ideological indoctrination, I believe that a fuller understanding of the Mostra Augustea requires a more detailed examination of its institutional background, scholarly and didactic goals, and narration of Roman history. The exhibition's organizers presented a vision of antiquity that was entirely consonant with the regime's discourse of *romanità*, but they also conceived of the MAR as a genuine academic undertaking and a novel museological project. I am therefore interested in understanding the interplay between the "ideological" and the "archaeological" at the Mostra Augustea, and what this explains about the Fascist "cult of Rome," intellectual production under the regime, and the political appropriation of classical antiquity. In what follows, I consider the exhibition's development and organization; its representation of Roman history and civilization; visitors' experiences and critical reception of the Mostra; and the subsequent fate of its collections.

Influences and Institutional Origins

While the Mostra Augustea della Romanità represented an unprecedented mobilization of scholarly energies and state resources, it was also the product of developments that predated Fascism.¹¹ Its institutional origins can be traced back to the Mostra Archeologica (Archaeological Exhibition), which formed part of the 1911 international exposition commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Italian unification. Just like the pavilions dedicated to industry, commerce and sanitation, the 1911 Archaeological Exhibition celebrated the achievements of the new nation—in this case, showcasing Italy's rediscovery of its glorious past. The exhibition's organizer, the celebrated archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani, accumulated a large collection of statues, inscriptions and other artifacts; all were plaster casts and reproductions, taken from museums across Europe, America and the Near East.¹² The objects were displayed according to country of provenance, in order to highlight Rome's role as the fount of Western Civilization.

11 On the long-term institutional history of the Mostra Augustea, see Arthurs (1997), Scriba (1995) and Pisani Sartorio (1983).

12 Lanciani (1845–1929) was, alongside Giacomo Boni, one of the most important Italian archaeologists of the post-unification period. He supervised excavations in the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill from the 1870s to the 1890s, and published extensively on ancient topography, architecture and urban history.

Following the Fascist accession to power, the collections of the Mostra Archaeologica were relocated to the Museo dell'Impero Romano (Museum of the Roman Empire), inaugurated in 1927. The museum's director and driving force was Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Lanciani's assistant in 1911 and, by the mid-1920s, one of Italy's most prominent archaeologists.¹³ Sharing his mentor's nationalist commitments, Giglioli had volunteered to fight in the First World War, and was a member of the far-right Associazione Nazionalista Italiana (absorbed into the Fascist Party in 1923). His enthusiastic participation in many of the regime's most important initiatives has led more than one scholar to identify Giglioli as the most ideologically-driven classicist of his generation.¹⁴ Even without speculating as to the extent of his political convictions, Giglioli was certainly preoccupied with currying favor with Mussolini and other leading figures in the regime, raising the national and international profile of his museum, and cementing his position as Fascism's pre-eminent authority on all matters Roman.

In 1932, Giglioli announced his plans for a mass exhibition celebrating the bimillenary of Augustus' birth, beginning on 23 September 1937.¹⁵ The initiative would be funded largely from Mussolini's personal budget, with assistance from various Fascist organizations; for example, the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (the regime's "after-work" leisure organization) offered discounted rail fares and package tours for attendees traveling to Rome.¹⁶ In these respects, the Mostra Augustea was following in the footsteps of the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista [Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution, MRF], held in 1932 to mark the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome.¹⁷ Heavily imbued with Futurist aesthetics, the MRF narrated the history of Fascism from the First World

13 Giglioli (1886–1958) participated in a broad range of activities during the Ventennio, supervising Rome's antiquities office from 1926 onward and leading excavations of the Mausoleum of Augustus, the Theater of Marcellus and other sites. He became a member of the Fascist Chamber of Deputies in 1934. For a rather apologetic biography written by one of his students, see Pallottino (1958).

14 For example, Daniele Manacorda deems Giglioli to be the quintessential "archaeological Fascist"—i.e., a Fascist engaging in archaeological activity—as opposed to other "Fascist archaeologists" whose work merely intersected with the exigencies of the regime; cf. Manacorda and Tamassia (1985). See Stefan Altekamp's chapter in the present volume for a related analysis of classicists in Nazi Germany.

15 It should be noted here that 23 September 1938, not 1937, was in fact the bimillenary of Augustus' birth; Giglioli and his colleagues evidently forgot that there was no year zero.

16 Giglioli to PCM, 16 July 1932, in MCR MAR b.8, fasc. "Preparazione MAR 1932."

17 There is considerable literature on the MRF; see Capanna (2004) and Schnapp (2003). On the MRF's significance for the Fascist historic imagination, see Fogu (2003), 132–189.

War to the present, bombarding the viewer's senses with photomontages, jarring sounds and disorienting spaces.¹⁸ This presentation—at once didactic, experiential and ritualized—was central to the subsequent conception of the Mostra Augustea. With almost four million visitors, the MRF demonstrated the tremendous possibilities that a large exhibition presented for mobilization at home, as well as publicity abroad. The connection between the two exhibitions went beyond inspiration: the Mostra Augustea was held in the same venue as the MRF—the nineteenth-century Palazzo delle Esposizioni on Rome's Via Nazionale—and, like its predecessor, required a dramatic transformation of the original beaux-arts façade.¹⁹ Whereas the 1932 exhibition had been presented in an angular modernist style, the façade for the Mostra Augustea, designed by the architect Alfredo Scalpelli, was conceived as an updated version of a Roman triumphal arch, with classical statuary crowning marble pillars. Quotations from Roman authors lined the outer walls, with an exhortation from Mussolini—"Italians, may the glories of the past be surpassed by the glories of the future!"—inscribed over the entrance. To reinforce the link between the two exhibitions, a revised version of the MRF was re-opened alongside the MAR in 1937. In many respects, then, the Mostra Augustea represented an extension and elaboration of strategies first developed at the Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista.

As an archaeological exhibition, the Mostra Augustea reined in some of the more avant-garde tendencies of its predecessor, and instead placed greater emphasis on the scholarly reconstruction of the past. Nevertheless, it too aimed to transcend the confines of traditional historical or art-historical display.²⁰ Since it consisted entirely of reproductions and models (an expansion of the 1911 collection, drawn from over 800 different museums internationally), the exhibition could never hope to compete with original masterpieces on display at more venerable institutions like the Capitoline or Vatican museums. Giglioli argued instead that copies offered greater flexibility and pedagogical potential: the material could be arranged not according to "the rigid norms of museums, but integrated with texts, photo-montages, maps and diagrams, which together create sections that unite scientific rigor and the liveliness of a modern exposition ... In this way, not only specialists, not only those who love history and archaeology, but all Italians can easily find documentation of the glorious first

18 On the design and content of the MRF, see Stone (1993), Andreotti (1992) and Schnapp (1992).

19 Ghirardo (1992).

20 For architectural analyses of the MAR, see Marcello (2011) and Rinaldi (1997).

Empire of our people ...”²¹ There would be “no monotony, no limits on the most ardent of modern tastes ... the constant and fundamental necessity is to place each artifact in its proper place ...”²² Approachable, well-lit, and supplemented by explanatory panels, the copies could more effectively convey their historical (and ideological) importance to the viewer.

The MAR’s design also gives some sense of its anticipated audience. Whereas traditional museums tended to attract antiquarians and educated enthusiasts, the Mostra Augustea was meant to appeal to a broad swathe of Italian society, from schoolchildren to housewives to scholars. To this end, the state undertook a massive advertising campaign.²³ Newspapers were filled with antiquity-related stories; LUCE, the regime’s film studio, produced a twenty-minute feature on the exhibition and its depiction of Roman civilization; and the Ministry of Popular Culture publicized the event with a series of radio spots:

Do you want to have a direct idea of the great public works carried out during the Empire of ancient Rome?

Do you want to learn about the road system of ancient Rome and the ways of traveling in those days?

You don’t need to be an archaeologist to be interested in the Mostra Augustea ... it will interest the general public because it presents the clearest synthesis of Roman life, in culture, art, industry, agriculture, etc.

Whatever your background, wherever your interests lie, you will find things of great interest.²⁴

At the same time, the organizers also appealed to an international public. Posters and pamphlets, translated into 24 different languages, were placed in railway stations and travel agencies across Europe.²⁵ World-renowned experts were invited to attend the exhibition and participate in a *Convegno Augusteo*, and Italian consulates organized Augustan-themed lectures in a number of European, North American and Middle Eastern cities. According to Giglioli, these events would remind the civilized world of its debt to the Eternal City:

21 *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937), x, xvi.

22 Giglioli (1938).

23 A full account of the advertising campaign can be found in a report by Giglioli, undated, in MCR MAR b.200, fasc.1, “Ufficio stampa e propaganda.”

24 MCR MAR b.201, fasc.7, sotto. “Radio.”

25 MCR MAR b. “Ricordi,” fasc. 1.

Athens had a Roman phase under Hadrian which, second only to the age of Pericles, left the greatest number of monuments. Constantinople is a creation of Constantine, built around the early nucleus of Byzantium; the center of Barcelona is clearly built from the nucleus of Roman Barcino; one can easily recognize Roman Lutetia Parisiorum in the Latin Quarter and the Île de la Cité in the core of Paris ... especially Vienna, in whose fortified center ... one finds the Roman Vindobona, and even in London with the Roman Londinium. The Bank of England and the London Stock Exchange are built on the city's Roman Forum.²⁶

Such efforts suggest that in addition to envisioning the Mostra Augustea as a tool for domestic political education, the regime also saw it as an instrument of cultural diplomacy. The exhibition would be both intensely nationalist—trumpeting Italian primacy at every turn—and universal, since it celebrated Rome's expansive influence and a common Western heritage. Foreigners, so often condescending toward Italy's contemporary inhabitants, would come to marvel at the resurrection of the Roman spirit under Fascism, as well as the scholarly expertise championed by Mussolini's regime.

Itineraries and Interpretations

Although it was officially devoted to the emperor's bimillenary, the Mostra Augustea encompassed all phases of Roman history and presented all expressions of its civilization, from art and architecture to fashion and hygiene. On the main (and most visited) floor of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, visitors followed a chronological reconstruction of the city's development, from its legendary foundation to the "rebirth of Empire in Fascist Italy." The first installations celebrated mythic figures like Romulus and Aeneas, and defended the originality of early Roman culture against charges of overdependence on Etruscan and Greek influences. The next series of rooms traced Rome's territorial expansion, first throughout the Italian peninsula (presented less as a conquest and more of a "synthesis" of regional cultures) and then across the Mediterranean; the Punic Wars in particular were celebrated as an expression of Roman discipline and military genius. While the early Roman Republic was celebrated for its sobriety and civic virtue, the late Republic was cast as an era of moral decline. The rise of *condottieri* like Marius, Sulla and Pompey epitomized the

26 Text of address by Giglioli, 4 June 1937, in MCR MAR b.22, fasc.6.

corruption of the state, the divisiveness of parliamentarism, and the decay of traditional beliefs; “the old, once-glorious oligarchic and parliamentary regime had failed too many times,” and Rome required a transformative, authoritarian leader capable of radically renewing the body politic.²⁷ The decisive blow to the old order was delivered by Julius Caesar. In a room envisioned as “a severe and solemn exaltation” of his legacy, the dictator was presented both as a military mastermind (as suggested by models of war machines and maps of his campaigns) and the author of the original “March on Rome,” and a prefiguration of the exhibition’s central protagonist.²⁸

Almost half of the installations on the main floor were devoted to Augustus himself, his family, and his era. The emperor was presented in a number of guises—as a victorious general (with the Prima Porta statue); as a high priest or *pontifex maximus* (with the Augustus of Via Labicana); and above all as the architect of the *Pax Romana*, “the pacifier of the ancient world ... one of the great benefactors of humanity, who created an order of things so that the immense treasure of Roman civilization ... could be consolidated and assimilated by the provinces, and transmitted to posterity.”²⁹ As these representations suggest, Augustus appeared less as a historical individual, and more as a transcendent, deified presence—as a review from the Vatican journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* put it, “the figure and works of Augustus dominate, even invisibly, and illuminate [the exhibition] with his light and spirit.”³⁰ This sense was reinforced by a series of rooms on various expressions of the “Augustan age,” from literature and architecture to the emperor’s cult in the provinces. There was even a life-sized reconstruction of a noble home from the Augustan era, complete with furnishings and wall paintings. Statues, friezes and laudatory texts reiterated themes of rebirth and renewal, at once moral, political, social and cultural. The *Princeps* was cast as a transformative leader who brought an end to civil war and social decline, revived ancient virtues and religious practices, and presided over an age of prosperity and stability.

Few (especially Italian) visitors would have missed the contemporary resonance of this message; however, it is important to recognize that these themes

27 Passerini (1939), 63.

28 *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937), 76. In Fascism’s early years, Julius Caesar was the Roman figure most closely identified with Mussolini. The regime held yearly ceremonies at the Temple of Julius Caesar in the Roman Forum as part of its commemoration of the modern “March on Rome.” See Wyke (2008), 82–88.

29 Radio address, 23 September 1938, in MCR MAR b. “Ricordi,” fasc.3.

30 Ferrua (1937), 481.

were also at the heart of Augustus' own "program of cultural renewal."³¹ As Paul Zanker has argued, the Republic's demise and the advent of the Principate required a "new visual language" to reframe the relationship between political elites and the Roman people.³² Under imperial patronage, artists were given "extremely narrow scope within which they could create new imagery."³³ The Augustan "revolution" had to be portrayed as a restoration, both of Republican institutions and of traditional mores. Images of fertility, piety, and familial unity were ubiquitous in monuments, coins and literary works. Urban space too was used as a canvas upon which to glorify the new (old) order. Augustus boasted of finding Rome a city of brick and leaving it a city of marble; construction in his honor (as with the Augustan Forum and the Ara Pacis) or that of the imperial family (like the Theater of Marcellus and the Portico of Octavia, named for his nephew and sister respectively) made palpable the munificence of Rome's "first citizen" and the dawn of a new era. To a significant extent, then, the Mostra Augustea allowed the emperor's propaganda to speak for itself.

Additionally, the themes of epochal change and rebirth provided a means for the Mostra's organizers to reconcile the glories of pagan Rome with the rise and triumph of Christianity. The room dedicated to the faith replicated the layout of a church, "severe and mystical ... but with an absolutely modern spirit," with a long oblong nave dominated by a large illuminated cross that in turn lit a map tracing the spread of Christianity throughout the empire.³⁴ Instead of reminding visitors of the adversarial relationship between Rome and early Christians, the exhibition cast Augustus as a providential figure; after all, Jesus himself had been born during his reign. In establishing a new pacific era, the Emperor had thus paved the way for the emergence of the new faith, while in turn "the nascent Church found in the unity and homogeneity of the Roman empire a powerful means for its rapid dissemination."³⁵ This narrative of complementarity held clear appeal for the Mostra's heavily Catholic audience, and avoided any mention of persecution or conflict.

Crucially, concepts of regeneration and renewal also underscored the commonalities between Rome's ancient *princeps* and its modern *dux*, elaborated in the final stop on the historical itinerary, "the Immortality of the Idea of Rome and the Rebirth of Empire in Fascist Italy." Through photographs and models

31 Zanker (1988), 101.

32 Zanker (1988), 3.

33 Zanker (1988), 111.

34 Mer (1937), 20. This installation was also modeled on a room honoring Fascist "martyrs" in the 1932 Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista.

35 Marconi (1937); see also Nelis' chapter in this volume.

of the regime's achievements, epigraphic quotations, and busts of King Victor Emanuel III and Mussolini, this room aimed to demonstrate that

the Roman imperial idea was not extinguished with the fall of the Western Empire ... it persevered mystically during the Middle Ages, and through it came the Renaissance and the Risorgimento in Italy ... With Fascism, with the will of the Duce, every ideal, every institution, every Roman deed will return to shine in the new Italy, and after the epic conflict of combatants on African soil, the Roman Empire rises up out of the ruins of a barbarian empire.³⁶

As this passage suggests, the value of the Roman past to Fascism was not just that it represented a national "golden age" or inspiration for imperial conquest, but that the Roman spirit—*romanità*—was being reclaimed and reincarnated in the "New Italy." In recent years, scholars have argued that Fascist ideology must be understood not simply as reactionary or atavistic, but as a political expression of modernism, "[a] peculiar genus of revolutionary project for the transformation of society."³⁷ Roger Griffin, for example, emphasizes the Fascist desire for rupture and transcendent new beginnings, for engineering an epochal break between the "old" and the "new"; Ruth Ben-Ghiat similarly highlights the importance of *bonifica*—redemption or regeneration—to Mussolini's modernizing project.³⁸ Fascism sought to purify and renew what it saw as a sterile, divided, corrupt national community. Whether through military mobilization, public hygiene programs or land reclamation schemes, the regime strove to remake bodies, social relations, and physical space in its own image.³⁹

From this perspective, we can better understand Augustus' historical and rhetorical importance in the eyes of the regime. Both leaders had emerged from situations of civil disorder to reform and renovate decaying political structures; both had carried out "Roman revolutions" (to quote Syme again), radical transformations of their people, while at the same time drawing inspiration from tradition. Just as Augustus had ushered in the birth of Christ, Mussolini had presided over the Lateran Accords of 1929, the historic reconciliation between

36 *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937), 362.

37 Griffin (2007), 6.

38 Ben-Ghiat (2001).

39 See also Horn (1994). On the refashioning of urban space in Rome, see Flavia Marcello's contributions to this volume.

the Italian state and the Catholic Church. Their policies were apparently underpinned by the same convictions: for example, the *Lex Julia* and the *Lex Papia Poppaea*, the Augustan laws that regulated marriage, outlawed adultery and penalized celibacy, were echoed by the Fascist “Battle for Births,” the campaign to police contraception and abortion, tax single men, and reward large families. Both measures, according to one of the Mostra’s explanatory texts, responded to moral crises (whether the corruption of the late Republic or the emergence of the “New Woman” after World War One), which in turn aggravated divorce, promiscuity and population decline. By “encouraging fertile marriages and maintaining the purity of the race,” the state both reversed moral degeneration and replenished the demographic stock, which the Fascists believed to be the most important indicator of national strength.⁴⁰

The parallels—and continuities—between Augustan Rome and Fascist Italy were extended in the upper level of the Mostra Augustea, which explored various facets of daily life in antiquity. In exhibits ranging from agriculture and winemaking to music and medicine, all modern Italians could identify in some way with their ancient counterparts:

The little boy will become curious before the showcase of toys: puppets, horses, rattles. Women will admire the sculptures, the architectural models, and everything else; but their attention will be intensely drawn to the images showing the life of the child, bathing, the wet-nurse soothing the newborn ... And with even more interest they will compare the fashions of today with fifteen different types of hairstyles: those of Livia and Agrippina, of Faustina and Giulia Domna; and they will study bracelets and necklaces, rings and parasols.⁴¹

As with the main floor, the tone of these displays was not only historical or antiquarian. The theme of discipline and moral regeneration remained pervasive, as with the installation dedicated to the Roman family. Governed by the authority of the *paterfamilias* and veneration for the ancestors, family life inculcated a “healthier and firmer spirit of rectitude and abnegation ... fecund virtues that prepared the Roman citizen for the trials and triumphs of public life and for his dominion over the world.”⁴² This conviction even underpinned the institution of slavery—mostly depicted in mosaics showing

⁴⁰ *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937), 245.

⁴¹ Cecchi (1937).

⁴² *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937), 599.

scenes of manumission—which under the Romans “was tempered by a sense of humanity, familiarity and affection.”⁴³ In a similar fashion, Roman religion was presented as a form of civic devotion and sacrifice, “a reverence for the divine, a respect for the sacred tradition of the country, a sense of personal responsibility that tempered spirits and made them steady in work.”⁴⁴ Once again, there was little mistaking the contemporary overtones of this portrait. *Homo fascistus*, the “New Man” engineered by the regime, was modeled on the *civis romanus* of antiquity.

The lower tier of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni was dedicated to cities, architecture, and public monumentality. Here, empire was the unifying theme. These structures testified not only to the genius of Roman construction, but to

the work of civilization carried out by Roman legionaries. Everywhere [one finds] roads, bridges, aqueducts, pools, sumptuous religious, military and civic buildings, everywhere a just and wise order which, with firm and paternal discipline, brought peace ... If all contemporary nations ... find in these documents the testimony of a glorious period in their civilization, for [Italians] they are extraordinarily pleasing and a source of legitimate pride.⁴⁵

This message—of Rome’s universal “civilizing mission” and Italian cultural primacy—was reinforced by reconstructions of celebrated monuments and buildings. The sheer scale of these structures, and the repetition of architectural motifs across the provinces, reinforced the grandeur and aesthetic unity of the empire and embodied essential features of the Roman character: solidity, hierarchy, discipline and *gravitas*.

As this overview of its installations suggests, the Mostra Augustea undertook a number of different missions and addressed a range of audiences. On one level, it provided a “scientific” history lesson and a detailed exposition of material culture; the artifacts presented in copy were not meant to be admired aesthetically, but to be “read” as products of a creative and dynamic ancient civilization. The grand monuments and statues expressed the imperial will of Augustus and other great leaders, while the reconstruction of everyday life permitted ordinary Italians to see themselves in their “ancestors.” Even foreigners were encouraged to celebrate, and identify with, the collective inher-

43 Cronaca Prealpina (1938).

44 Turchi (1939), 8–9.

45 Undated (1938), MCR MAR b.10, “Conferenze radiofoniche.”

itance of Roman antiquity. Yet the MAR's presentation of the past was also conditioned—both subtly and explicitly—by the ideological imperatives of its creators. Its narrative of greatness, decline, renewal and apotheosis closely resembled the regime's own historical vision; so too did the exaltation of a singular individual responsible for the moral, ethical and political regeneration of society. In what follows, we shall consider how legible, and how convincing, these messages were to audiences both at home and abroad.

Attendance and Reception

In his speech at the Mostra Augustea's closing ceremonies, Giulio Quirino Giglioli triumphantly announced that the exhibition had attracted over a million visitors and netted more than L1,935,000 in entry receipts.⁴⁶ Although this tally was only about a quarter of that for the 1932 Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista, he declared that the event had been an unqualified success.

Giglioli's claims aside, how successful was the MAR, both as a mass political spectacle and as an expression of scholarly and scientific expertise? It is, of course, hard to gauge popular responses toward the exhibition, particularly given the repressive climate imposed by the regime. However, a closer inspection of attendance records does provide some insight into the composition and potential motivations of visitors. As the organizers themselves acknowledged, the final total of one million visitors was inflated by official tours (by visiting dignitaries, regime officials and conference participants) and mandatory visits by school groups, the military, and Fascist associations; this was also reflected in the fact that the majority of tickets sold were either discounted or free.⁴⁷ A significant number of attendees, in other words, had not come under their own initiative. Despite the efforts of Dopolavoro, the Fascist leisure organization, only 6,000 of its members attended the exhibition, and of those, only 2,700 had come from long distances.⁴⁸ Indeed, some travelers seem to have exploited the system by purchasing rail tickets, obtaining the discount stamp from the Mostra's ticketing office, and then immediately leaving the exhibition to enjoy their day in the city.⁴⁹ The archives are also filled with Gigli-

46 Text of Giglioli's closing speech, 7 November 1938, in MCR MAR b. "Chiusura."

47 Report by Giglioli, 15 April 1938 in ACS PCM 1937–1939 fasc.14, sotto.1, no. 918, sotto.4.1.

48 Massano to Giglioli, 26 November 1938, MCR MAR b. "Ricordi," fasc.2.

49 Giglioli to Medici del Vascello, June 1938, in MCR MAR b.10, fasc. "Mostre e congressi," sotto. "Mostra Dopolavoro." Marla Stone has observed a similar problem at the MRF—see Stone (1993), 233–236.

oli's entreaties to various government agencies for greater exposure and more group visits. In a final bid to raise attendance figures, he successfully lobbied to have the MAR remain open six weeks after the official end of the Augustan bimillenary. On the exhibition's final day, the entrance fee was slashed by over three quarters, drawing a crowd of 20,000.⁵⁰ While these figures do not give a definitive picture of the general public's attitudes toward the MAR, they do suggest that the exhibition was more successful as a showcase, i.e. as an official venue for the regime's activities, than as an attraction capable of generating public interest. During the year of the Augustan bimillenary, the Mostra became a fixture on the itineraries of foreign luminaries (its most famous visitor, Adolf Hitler, toured the main level with Benito Mussolini during his visit to the capital in May 1938), and was a regular feature in the regime's newsreels, but seems to have been less successful in capturing the imagination of ordinary Italians.

For these reasons, the exhibition is perhaps most effectively assessed in terms of the regime's self-representation (both domestically and internationally), rather than as a totalitarian instrument of ideological indoctrination. Unsurprisingly, the Italian press reviewed the MAR in glowing terms. Going from room to room, wrote one journalist, "one has the impression of turning the pages of a new, immortal poem of *romanità* ... in the organization of this wonderful exhibition, one can discern the spirit of a poet, not just the mind of a historian."⁵¹ For the *Cronaca Prealpina* (Varese), it was "not a museum, a mute and cold display, but a living and dynamic guide ..."; for *Il Popolo di Brescia*, "a voyage across history ... plunging into the private lives of ancient Romans"; and for the *Broletto* of Como, it was "not an exhibition ... [but] a ritual act carried out by Italy ..."⁵² Such acclaim must clearly be taken with more than a modicum of salt, given the regime's tight grip on the press. However, independent publications were equally enthusiastic. *La Civiltà Cattolica* praised the "varied, modern, original arrangement, almost never cumbersome, wisely illuminated ... perfectly clear and visible at every point ... One can run through it in a few hours, and everyone will take away a body of useful information and an impression of unity."⁵³ The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* agreed that the exhibition "could not have been prepared with higher principles in mind, or

50 *Il Corriere della Sera* (1938).

51 Sùrico to Giglioli, 30 November 1937, MCR MAR b. "Visite collettive."

52 These extracts are taken from MCR MAR b. "Ricordi," sotto.8, and date from between September and December 1937.

53 Ferrua (1937), 490–491.

laid out in a more fitting and practical manner ... [it could be] easily understood by even modestly cultured visitors.”⁵⁴

International reviewers were similarly positive. While acknowledging that “its character as a work of ‘propaganda’” was never concealed, France’s *Revue Archéologique* reported that “never have so many documents of a life of a people been presented with such didactic mindfulness”;⁵⁵ the *Journal of Roman Studies* (UK) called it “the completest synopsis of the Roman achievement that we are likely to see ... overshadowing all previous exhibitions of its kind.”⁵⁶ The magazine *Month* argued that even someone “with no particular sympathy with either Catholicism or Fascism could still lose himself in the thought of a great human civilization.”⁵⁷ Giglioli also received many notes of support from foreign scholars. A.W. Van Buren, director of the American Academy, told Giglioli after the inauguration that the MAR had been “truly a masterful re-evocation of *romanità* in all its manifestations. I have admired not only the overall concept behind this unique enterprise, but also the way in which it was realized. I am sure that the exhibition will make a considerable contribution to the education of all peoples who trace their civilization from Rome ...”⁵⁸ The Yale historian Michael Rostovtzeff wrote that he had enjoyed the exhibition on two levels:

As a scholar I learned a lot from studying the various objects on display at the Mostra. Many were familiar; but I was able to study them in their setting, with beautiful copies and under the guidance of experts. But there were many monuments that were unknown to me or that I knew only from inadequate reproductions ... But perhaps I enjoyed the exhibition more as a teacher of Roman history. The Mostra is truly a splendid course on Roman history, such that I would never be able to give my students ... I am convinced that the Mostra might have an educational value even greater than its scientific value.⁵⁹

The largely positive critical response to the Mostra Augustea suggests that it was taken seriously by the international academy as a scientific reconstruction of the past, and not just interpreted as a propagandistic exercise. Once again,

54 Meneghini (1937).

55 *Revue Archéologique* (1938), 335.

56 Meiggs (1939), 262.

57 Murray (1937), 527.

58 Van Buren to Giglioli, 23 September 1937, MCR MAR b. “Inaugurazione”, fasc.2.

59 Rostovtzeff to Galassi Paluzzi, 31 July 1938, in MCR MAR b.201, fasc.11, sotto. “Convegno Augusteo.”

we can conclude that the exhibition had different goals, and different messages, for a variety of audiences. Italian schoolchildren, soldiers, and Party functionaries on guided tours were meant to derive inspiration and explicit lessons from their Roman forebears. For Hitler, Mussolini and other dignitaries, the MAR served as a monumental backdrop for photo opportunities. Non-Italian visitors (and particularly specialists), on the other hand, seem to have been able to parse out the “archaeological” and the “ideological,” and approach the exhibition as the product of scholarly diligence.

New Incarnations

Although the Mostra Augustea closed its doors in November 1938, Giglioli’s goal from the outset had been to position his institution as the regime’s principal “repository” of Roman material culture, and himself as its foremost interpreter. Until the regime’s demise in July 1943, he tirelessly promoted cultural initiatives responding to the regime’s ideological exigencies. In 1940, for example, Giglioli contributed plans for the unrealized *Mostra della Razza* [Exhibition of Race], organized by the Ministry of National Education to promote “racial consciousness” among Italy’s youth (the regime had officially adopted an “Aryanist” racial orientation in 1938). His proposal reiterated much of the MAR’s historical narrative, and recycled many of its installations, but now recast these as a “historical and political demonstration of Rome’s role in the creation of the nation and Italian racial unity.”⁶⁰ Exhibits were to include “the Protection of the Race,” which presented baths and aqueducts as evidence of “the protection and physical improvement of the race through the powerful means of water, pure to drink [and] abundant for bathing”;⁶¹ “Physical and Moral Characteristics,” a display of Roman portraiture “to demonstrate the physical unity of the race” as well as representations of “non-Roman” types like Africans and Semites;⁶² and a room on the decline of Rome, attributed to “the numerical and moral inadequacy of Italians” as well as the disappearance of “a hierarchical relationship between Italy and the provinces.”⁶³ Objects that in 1937 had embodied the achievements of the Augustan age were now mobilized for more strident assertions of racial supremacy.⁶⁴

60 Untitled, undated proposal in MCR MAR b.170, fasc.7.

61 Untitled, undated proposal in MCR MAR b.170, fasc.2.

62 Untitled, undated proposal in MCR MAR b.170, fasc.3.

63 Untitled, undated proposal in MCR MAR b.170, fasc.5.

64 For a related discussion of Aryanist theories in Germany prior to and during Nazism, see Felix Wiedemann’s contribution to the present volume.

An even more ambitious use of the Mostra's resources can be found in Giglioli's proposals for the Esposizione Universale di Roma [Universal Exposition of Rome, EUR or E42], an international exposition marking the twentieth anniversary of the Fascist regime in 1942.⁶⁵ Planned both as a year-long "Olympiad of Civilizations" and a permanent new quarter on Rome's southern outskirts, the EUR was intended to celebrate the achievements of the "New Italy" in all sectors of human endeavor. The MAR collections would play a significant role in two major exhibits. The first, the Mostra della Civiltà Italiana [Exhibition of Italian Civilization], housed in a neoclassical palazzo of the same name (also known as the "square Colosseum"), was a multi-story chronological itinerary through all of Italian history, from the peninsula's earliest inhabitants to the Fascist era; Giglioli and his collaborators were responsible for the sections on Roman antiquity. The second venture was closest to Giglioli's heart: the Mostra della Romanità (Exhibition of Romanità), an expanded version of the 1937–1938 exhibition. Unlike its predecessor, it was envisioned as a permanent institution—part museum, part exhibition, part international center for archaeological research. The Mostra della Romanità, in other words, was to have been the crowning achievement of Giglioli's career and the culmination of the museological project first conceived in 1911.

Of course, war intervened once more. The celebrations of 1942 were put on hold, and a year later Mussolini's regime collapsed under the weight of Allied invasion and popular discontent. After the Second World War, Giglioli was initially purged for his activities under the regime, but soon thereafter was reinstated as a professor of archaeology at the University of Rome. The Mostra Augustea also had a post-Fascist afterlife: in 1955, under the patronage of FIAT, it was established as a permanent museum, the Museo della Civiltà Romana [Museum of Roman Civilization]. It remains arguably Rome's most comprehensive historical museum, though the Museum has been closed for repairs since 2013.

Conclusion

In their recently published catalog, the organizers of *Augusto* 2014 confronted the legacy of the Mostra Augustea della Romanità head-on. The two exhibitions, they asserted, had taken place in "radically different cultural atmospheres, political situations, and historical moments."⁶⁶ In the twenty-first cen-

65 On plans for the EUR, see especially Gregory and Tartaro (1987) and Calvesi et al. (1987).

66 Giardina (2013), 57. See also Beard (2014).

ture, “the Roman Empire no longer provokes passionate aspirations or deliriums of power.” Instead, for contemporary audiences, classical antiquity is depoliticized, mythologized and consigned to the past, the stuff of “great tales ... historical novels and films.”⁶⁷ This desire to distance 2014 from 1937 was also evident in the composition of the two exhibitions. Whereas the MAR was conceived as a detailed reconstruction of every facet of Roman civilization, and thus meant to inculcate clear historical “lessons,” *Augusto* was avowedly geared toward aesthetic appreciation. The former used casts, models and photomontages to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a calculated and didactic “total work of art”; the latter, by contrast, relied on the aura of original artifacts to inspire awe. Given these interpretive and institutional differences, it is tempting to view the most recent commemoration of Augustus as a revision and an act of reclamation. For over seventy years, the legacy of Rome’s first emperor was heavily conditioned by the two-thousandth anniversary of his birth. Perhaps the bimillenary of his death will pave the way for a new Augustus to emerge, no longer marked by the taint of Fascist appropriation.

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67 Giardina (2013), 57.

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“May a Ray from Hellas Shine upon Us”: Plato in the George-Circle*

Stefan Rebenich

When Ernst Troeltsch proposed in the early 1920s that “The philosophical theories of the George-Circle” should be put forward as the subject of an essay competition, his suggestion was vetoed by a colleague in no uncertain terms: “We do not concern ourselves with such tripe”.¹ This chapter of the history of scholarship has remained unwritten until now, and the following pages cannot cover the entire topic. However, using the figure of Plato as an example, this article will explore the influence of the circle of Stefan George (1868–1933) on academia. The significance of George’s Plato in the philological, historical, and philosophical discourse surrounding Plato is controversial. To date, scholars have preferred general statements: some maintain that one can speak of Platonic scholarship before and after George; others believe that academia did not profit in the slightest from the work of the George-Circle.²

The Current State of Research

Plato was one of the most popular figures in the George-Circle. To cite an established statistic, between the 1910s and 1950s seven authors in the circle published 26 works on the Greek philosopher,³ including translations and biographies.⁴ All stress the importance of the historical figure of Plato for the present. Particularly significant is the explicit manner in which these writings distinguished themselves from contemporary academia. Their authors renounced the paraphernalia of learned writing and claimed to be able to unite poetry and scholarship. Their aim was to write in an aesthetically sophisticated fashion.

* Translated by Anthony Ellis. The original German version was published in *George-Jahrbuch* 7 (2009), 115–141.

1 Troeltsch (1924), 676.

2 See e.g., Wolters (1930), 430 ff.; Starke (1959), 21, 221.

3 Starke (1959), 9, 215–216. See also Boehringer (1951), 222–223.

4 See Landmann (1963), 42; Starke (1959), 11 ff.

The original Greek text often retreated into the background, with the holy spirit of Stefan George taking its place. There was talk of *Schau* ("perception"), *Gesamt* ("the entirety"), *Ewe* ("the eternal"), and *Gebild* ("construction"); while repeated neologisms such as *der Sterbling* ("the mortal"), *die Seherfrau* ("the seer-woman"—used for Diotima), *das männisch-gymnastische Wesen* ("the male gymnastic being"), and *die sokratische Tucht* ("the Socratic bravery") test the reader's patience.⁵

In truth, all of this has little to do with Plato, and a great deal to do with Stefan George. Plato's *Politeia* is, so to speak, dragged down onto the tapestry of life.⁶ The "Georgization" of Plato has of course long been noted. Even as early as 1929, an observant Jesuit devoted a substantial article to the topic, entitled "Stefan George explained through Kurt Singer's Plato".⁷ In the same year, Hans Leisegang stressed that "for the Greeks of his time" Plato was "what George ought to be for the culture of today".⁸

The most elaborate debate over the history of the reception of Plato in the George-Circle came from the pen of a doctoral candidate who dedicated his dissertation to the subject. Ernst Eugen Starke set out, with a little help from Martin Heidegger, to examine "whether the statements of the George-Circle about Plato correspond to the latter's nature or not".⁹ To that end, he attempted to distill a coherent vision of Plato from the George-Circle, which he bravely contrasted with his own; the historical-critical method was to be used to conquer those who had rejected it. After 200 pages, Starke hits his target: the interpreters of Plato from the George-Circle were "half-blind"; they perverted Plato, and represented "merely one phase of European nihilism". He concludes that: "they offer no path into the future".¹⁰

But how persuasive are the differences which Starke identifies between the George-Circle's works on Plato and the view of Plato that emerges from scholars outside the circle? Starke views these as essential, but does this separation not ignore the complex interplay between the George-Circle and contemporary academia? Does the Georginization of Plato not, moreover, correspond to

5 On George's neologisms, his increasing tendency to avoid non-Germanic words, and issues involved in translation, see Norton (2002), xvi, 157–158.

6 George (1899), translated by Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz as *The Tapestry of Life and the Songs of Dream and Death with a Prelude*, in *The Works of Stefan George*, 2nd ed., Chapel Hill, 1974.

7 Schoemann (1929).

8 Leisegang (1929), 44.

9 Starke (1959), 3.

10 Starke (1959), 212–214.

the Platonization of George?¹¹ Carola Groppe has convincingly argued that the appeal to Plato contributed to the charismatic apotheosis of the master, something which had incidentally already struck Max Weber;¹² just as Plato held the central position in the Academy, so George sat at the center of his circle. George was strengthened in his elite role through the circle's publications on Plato, "because the position of the poet as the eternal seer was transfigured into a historical constant".¹³ Plato took his place alongside Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Hölderlin. A charismatic leader and prophet was hypostasized into antiquity.

The influence of the George-Circle's interpretation of Plato on *Altertums-wissenschaft* ("the academic study of antiquity")¹⁴ in general, and on classical philology in particular, has received scant attention,¹⁵ and calls for further study have rightly been made in recent years.¹⁶ I mention this in order to show that the members of the George-Circle, despite placing themselves outside academic discourse, successfully introduced non-academic ideas into the convulsed and crisis-laden *Altertumswissenschaften* of the 1920s. Their contemporary interpretation of antiquity, and specifically Plato, became, if not at home in academic research, at least the object of critical reflection.

From this perspective, it will be necessary first to reconstruct the origins, characteristics, and functions of the George-Circle's interpretation of Plato. I leave aside the obvious but still under-examined question of the different visions of Plato that existed within the George-Circle itself (and likewise the different Platos of classical philology). Nor will I discuss the continuity between the circle's understanding of Plato and earlier romantic interpretations of the philosopher, the Diltheyan categories of life and understanding, or the mutually influential relationship with Existentialism. Instead, I shall concentrate exclusively on the Neo-Kantian Plato. What I offer is thus a fragment—at best,

11 As already argued by Franz Joseph Brecht in Brecht (1929), 55.

12 Max Weber saw the George-Circle as an interesting example of charismatic leadership in the modern period. In George's disciples he saw economically independent gentlemen, able to afford their artistic enthusiasm for the "holy Stefan", as he called George. See Radkau (2005), 468 ff.; Riedel (2006), 84 ff.; and above all Karlauf (2007), 410 ff.

13 Groppe (2001), 627; further Karlauf (2007), 401 ff.

14 Henceforth the German term *Altertumswissenschaft* (and its plural *Altertumswissenschaften*) is left untranslated; *klassische Philologie*, by contrast, is rendered throughout as "classical philology".

15 Cf. Groppe (2001), 640 ff. for further references, to which may be added Lacchin (2006).

16 See e.g., Groppe (2001), 640 and Kolk (1998), 465–482 on Plato, the chief witness ('Kronzeuge').

a point of departure for further considerations.¹⁷ We will begin with the origins of the interpretation of Plato put forward by George and his circle.

Beginnings

Around 1930, Kurt Hildebrandt penned the origin-myth for the entrance of Plato into the George circle. It was said to have begun with Friedrich Wolters' 1909 work *Herrschaft und Dienst* (*Rule and Service*). There, Hildebrandt argued, Wolters conceived the idea of the ruling religious figure "in which the body was deified, and divinity made flesh"; it was "from this new conviction" that Plato was then interpreted.¹⁸ This is at best a half-truth, however; to settle the question, we must look further afield.

Of course, Stefan George had read Plato at the Darmstadt Gymnasium which he attended from Michaelmas 1882 to Easter 1888.¹⁹ The curriculum of the period stipulated a selection from the Platonic corpus chosen "with regard to pedagogically significant ethical content". In the final two years of the Gymnasium, Socrates stood in the foreground: the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* were required reading.²⁰ Socrates, the man who drained the hemlock cup, was the Greek paradigm of the heroic individual; his example served to teach that one should not try to elude a legally-imposed punishment through flight, even when one repudiated the political system that had imposed that punishment.²¹ George departed from dusty classical pedagogy of this sort at the latest in the bohemian society of Paris. There, the Symbolists preached aesthetic immanence and the autonomy of the artwork. Their concept of the symbol drew on a number of disparate philosophical sources—the natural philosophy of German idealism as well as the neo-Platonic theory of beauty.²² But all this interested George very little; he was fascinated by the aesthetics of decadence, the immorality of the avant-garde, and the elitism of a pretentious poet-aristocracy (*Dichteraristokratie*). Roman themes and late antiquity stood at the center of

17 Since the publication of the original German article (see asterisk note), further work on the topic has been done by Lane (2011), Oestersandfort (2012) and Pohle (2017), to which reference is made below.

18 Cf. Starke (1959), 10–11.

19 On this topic see e.g., Groppe (2001), 122 and n. 17.

20 George's personal library preserved copies of these three Platonic works; cf. Karlauf (2007), 713, n. 18.

21 Cf. Apel and Bittner (1994), 67–68, 114.

22 Cf. Stahl (1999). For a critical view of Baudelaire's Platonism see Brix (2001).

his interest in this period. Plato was thus first discovered back home. In Germany, George broke with the Alexandrian pomp of “Algabal”, and his books of *Hirten- und Preisgedichte* (*Pastoral and Praise Poems*) urged a new simplicity. His interest lay not in the magnificence of the Attic Empire,²³ and certainly not in Athenian democracy, but rather in archaic Sparta and the Dorian poet Pindar.

It all began with a vague enthusiasm for Hellas. Thus, in the *Blätter für die Kunst*, the journal which the 24-year-old George founded, and which was to become the central organ of his poetry, he writes:

An entirely decadent world anxiously attempted to satisfy the poor in spirit in every way; if only a rising world would undertake to care for the rich in spirit. May a ray from Hellas shine upon us; may our youth no longer view life as lowly, may they rather begin to see it as glowing; may they search with body and spirit for a beautiful measure; may they desire to stride through life beautifully and with a free head; finally, may they also understand their people to be great, rather than understanding them in the narrower sense as a tribe. It is here that one can find the change in German nature at the turn of the century.²⁴

The ray from Hellas, handed down from Nietzsche, ought by now to have illuminated a selected circle: “our youth”.²⁵

It is no longer possible to reconstruct the precise point at which George came across Plato in adult life, because the evidence itself is missing. Nietzsche may have been the conduit. As Heinz Raschel has shown, Nietzsche's influence on the George-Circle, as on many other avant-garde groups,²⁶ is clear, and many cultivated an aristocratic affinity with his writings. Nietzsche had begun to intone the elitist paean, had called for a fight against mediocrity, and had proclaimed the idea of a renewal of Germany. His ideal of beauty and aesthetic form, his lionization of youthful heroism, his reconfiguration of society, and his reassessment of all values appealed to George and his adepts. Nietzsche was celebrated as the conqueror of the nineteenth century, who had shown that dry academia had nothing to do with life, and that the poet ought to create an art that directly reflected life itself.²⁷ Through Nietzsche, around the year 1910,

23 Cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1901).

24 *Blätter für die Kunst*, vol. 4.1/2, November 1897, 4.

25 Cf. Landfried (1975), 223.

26 Raschel (1984).

27 Cf. Aschheim (2000), 72 ff.

George found Plato,²⁸ as well as early Greece, archaic sculpture, Homeric Epic, Pindar, and Aeschylus. This because—despite Winckelmann, Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Schopenhauer—Plato the philosopher was first rediscovered in Germany by Nietzsche.

Nietzsche of course had a negative view of Plato: he saw Greek philosophy—and Socrates—as responsible for the decline of true Greekness. A positive vision of Plato could only be gained if one emancipated oneself from Nietzsche.²⁹ This step was first taken by the doctor Kurt Hildebrandt, who in 1912 produced a translation of Plato's *Symposium* which received much attention; in the introduction, Hildebrandt attempted to reformulate the central concept of *eros*.³⁰ This laid the foundations for wider debates about Platonic philosophy in the George-Circle.³¹ However, within the George-Circle itself, the esoteric dissertation of Heinrich Friedemann gained canonical status. Friedemann had studied with the neo-Kantian Paul Natorp in Marburg, but dedicated his book on Plato to Friedrich Gundolf, his leader and friend (*dem Führer und Freund*). The 26-year-old doctoral candidate, who had been supervised by Paul Hensel at Erlangen, did not concur with the neo-Kantian views of Natorp, who claimed Plato as a forefather of Kant; Friedemann broke with the idealizing treatment of the Greek philosophers and abandoned the ultimately fruitless search for the unity of the multiple in the realm of ideas.³²

The characteristic traits of his vision of Plato can be quickly enumerated: at its center stands not Plato the philosopher and author, but Plato the poet and priest, whose writings give expression to the “two primal forces of Greek life”: sculpture and cult.³³ His thought is characterized less through reason than through *μανία* (“inspiration” or “madness”). He strives not for knowledge, but to perceive the beautiful. Friedemann overcomes the Platonic body-soul dualism

28 See Hildebrandt (1965), 79. See also Karlauf (2007), 401–402.

29 Contrast the view of Lane (2011), 136–137, who objects to my statement (in the original German version of this article) that “Nietzsche had a negative view of Plato”. Although Nietzsche's own view of Plato can indeed be further nuanced, it is clear, as Lane herself notes, that the George-Circle felt the need to defend Plato and Socrates against Nietzsche's attacks, and understood him, correctly, to be one of Plato's greatest critics (for examples, see the passages Lane cites on pp. 139 and 141).

30 See *Platons Gastmahl. Übertragen und eingeleitet von Kurt Hildebrandt*, Leipzig, 1912.

31 Cf. Brecht (1929), 31.

32 On Friedemann, see Merklin (2012) and esp. Pohle (2017), 133 ff. On the neo-Kantian perception of Plato see Holzhey (1997); Lembeck (1994); Pohle (2017), 87 ff.

33 Friedemann (1914), 31. The second edition from 1931 appeared with an epilogue by Kurt Hildebrandt.

by interpreting the Platonic body as a soul.³⁴ Divinity is made flesh, while the body is deified. Plato's *Politeia* and *Nomoi* held interests above and beyond this; rulership and service are recognized as the basis of the Platonic state. The realm created by the Greek philosophers is a "cultic society" of philosopher-kings and disciples. *Eros* holds this elite circle together. The highest duty of the band of disciples is unconditional loyalty. Plato is the divine seer and prophet, the master legitimated by his charisma. He is the "singer and prophet", leader and man of action (*Täter*), poet and founder, the "immortal father of a spiritual realm".³⁵ And Socrates? No longer the outstanding representative of the Greek enlightenment celebrated in the nineteenth century, Socrates has become the ideal of aristocratic humanity.

Friedemann's essay was published a few days after the outbreak of the First World War, in the same publishing house which printed George's *Blätter für die Kunst*. Its author, not yet 27 years old, lost his life fighting against the army of the Tsar. George and his friends quickly transfigured him into a youthful demi-god of Platonic exegesis: "Through his work, Friedemann planted a vision of Plato which no spiritually-awakened German could ignore; everybody had either to follow or to oppose him. From now on there exists a view of Plato before and after Friedemann's work, whether that fact is openly acknowledged or cravenly hidden."³⁶ Friedrich Wolters' view is exaggerated, but it underlines the epochal significance of the book, at least for the George-Circle. His Plato, as Kurt Weigand has aptly remarked, "relates to Plato in the same way as the horse pictures by Marc and Macke relate to horses. They are pure expressionism. A prodigious provocation to a century of proud Platonic philology."³⁷

Friedemann determined the authoritative categories in the interpretation of Plato. "In the small circle granted to us," Plato should "re-awaken a submerged life through the kindred beat of spiritual love". "Just as life itself slips away in the collection of facts, and only offers itself to the burning heart, so too Greekness cannot be grasped by knowledge. Knowledge creates the path that leads to the gate; entrance is only granted by the kinship of spiritual life."³⁸ In successive chapters, Friedemann formulated his manifesto for approaching Plato: Socrates, the ideas, *eros*, soul and body, the mythical leader, the *Reich* ("realm", "empire"). Plato himself is the founder of a new cult, the leader and creator of humanity, who used his superlative understanding and the wisdom

34 Friedemann (1914), 89.

35 Friedemann (1914), 138.

36 Wolters (1930), 431.

37 Weigand (1971), 71.

38 Friedemann (1914), 139.

which he expressed through myth to educate an aristocratic elite. The Academy was interpreted as a union of master and disciple, characterized by mastery and service and celebrated as a “school of education”.³⁹ For Friedemann, Plato’s critique of the arts is not a judgment on art as a form of initiation into life *per se*; rather, it is a reminder of the fact that art is not itself capable of regenerating life. The “re-enlivened society”, by contrast, is presented by the author as a prerequisite for every flourishing of the arts; he suggests that the reader should imagine Plato’s state as a living being, distinguished from the institutions of today in that it is itself a work created from the spirit of art. Only a successful state of this sort could carve out a new place for the arts:

Only from this perspective can Plato’s attitude to art—always viewed as contradictory—become complete and self-evident: artistic education, conceived of as its own cult, is for him the foundation of the state since, when convulsed, it destroys the state, and he who changes it also changes the laws of the state. Yet no battle-cry is more fierce than that raised against the presentation and extortion of the individual arts, which have already freed themselves from the *Gesamtwerk* of cult, and against the remains of the old services rendered to the gods, which block the heavens against the new growth.⁴⁰

No less sweeping is Friedemann’s quarrel with the Platonic theory of forms. In the neo-Kantian tradition, the forms are understood as a hypothesis (in the neo-Kantian sense), but this hypothesis “is the originally rational perception of the forms; the forms of the mature Plato are condensed into a cultic figure (*Gestalt*).”⁴¹ The theory of forms is, in Friedemann’s interpretation, not the foundation of a theory of knowledge; rather it assumes the status of dogma and prophecy. He continues, “the greater disciple can merge the willing spirits, shaken by the sensuous and exemplary life of the master and the mythical sheen of his death, with the sphere of a corporeal realm.”⁴² As Kurt Weigand has rightly noted, Friedemann’s dissertation illustrates what the theory of forms meant for the circle: “First, only the perfect form (*Gestalt*) of the individual human attests to the corporeality of the soul. From the *Politeia* there then arises a supra-individual form (*überindividuelle Gestalt*): a community of humans is

39 Friedemann (1914), 117.

40 Friedemann (1914), 134–135. Here compare Mattenklott (2001), 245.

41 Friedemann (1914), 32.

42 Friedemann (1914), 22.

addressed as a 'form' (*Gestalt*).⁴³ Friedemann makes this vision of spiritual leadership concrete, and gave the circle a wholly new program. He connected the concepts of *Gestalt* ("form", "figure") and of *Reich* ("realm") through the foundation of a cult. The circle thereby forged its own self-conception. It was no longer merely a series of like-minded men; rather, it recognized itself as the spiritual realm, as the Platonic state.⁴⁴

Friedemann formulated his program: "Today, the birth of the spiritual life" calls "for an ancestor".⁴⁵ Friedemann had found that ancestor, transcended Nietzsche's interpretation of Plato, and given a new mission to the circle. George was enthusiastic. He devoured Friedemann's work in two nights, and placed it on a par with Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*.⁴⁶ Natorp, by contrast, turned away in horror: the anthropocentrism of this interpretation of Plato was abhorrent to him, and he could not abide its "semi-fanatic fixation on the here and now".⁴⁷ Plato was exiled to a world without transcendence. His philosophy was approached not by rational means, but through feeling and sensation. A Plato formed in the image of George perfectly matched the ancient masked processions and the homoerotic deification of the body in the artistic gatherings of the *Künstlerfest*; a splendid challenge to the norms of the educated bourgeois.⁴⁸

All this would be worthy of little more than a footnote, if it were not the case that the reception of Plato, energized by Nietzsche and elaborated with the help of neo-Kantianism, enabled the dandyish poet of the "fin de siècle" to metamorphose into the *Geistpolitiker* ("spiritual politician") of the next century, who became the charismatic leader of "a so-called state", "which was known to its supporters as 'secret Germany'".⁴⁹ Amongst the circle, the Platonic *Politeia* which Friedemann had created served as the normative model of a new realm (*Reich*) that had been sanctioned by George. From the poet George there emerged the master of dialogue; from the man who had been awakened by Maximin, the Socratic awakener.⁵⁰

43 Weigand (1971), 78.

44 Weigand (1971), 78; Groppe (2001), 418.

45 Friedemann (1914), 139.

46 See Glöckner (1971), 83; Hildebrandt (1965), 101; Norton (2002), 531.

47 Natorp (1921), 511. The first edition appeared in Leipzig, 1903.

48 Cf. Sünderhauf (2004), 217 ff.

49 Raulff (2006), 127. See also Norton (2002).

50 Cf. Weigand (1971), 72. For Maximin (i.e., Maximilian Kronberger) the object of George's affections until his early death in March 1902 on his 16th birthday, see Karlauf (2007), 342 ff.

New Departures

Friedemann had abandoned the Neoplatonic-Christian Plato and the epistemological Plato. Just as Nietzsche had formed Greek tragedy in the image of Wagner, so Friedemann had created Plato in the image of George. But his book only began to exert a perceptible influence after the First World War. In 1920, Kurt Singer adopted Friedemann's ideas in a lecture on "Plato and Greekness".⁵¹ Singer's paper anticipated his later book *Plato the Founder*, published in 1927.⁵² In 1921, Edgar Salin explored the history of the genre of utopia and began with "Plato and the Greek Utopia".⁵³ At the beginning of the 1920s, Kurt Hildebrandt, in a philosophical dissertation, set about harmonizing Nietzsche and Plato—or, more accurately, "Georgizing" them.⁵⁴ The attempt failed miserably.

A cursory reading of these works underlines the complexity and heterogeneity of the vision of Plato in the George-Circle. To take one example, we may note that, in the Platonic *Politeia*, the doctor Hildebrandt discovered a set of instructions for the breeding of humanity, while the upper-class Salin read it as an invitation to establish social harmony. The unity of the George-Circle's conception of Plato is a construct, created by the circle's authors themselves in order to distinguish themselves from established research, even after elements of their view of Plato had long since become part of academic discourse. The circle's claims of distance from nineteenth-century "middle-class scholarship" (*bürgerliche Wissenschaft*) that had "buried"⁵⁵ Plato was thus an empty formula. In 1933, Hildebrandt found himself moved by "the spirit's struggle for power" (*Der Kampf des Geistes um die Macht*), and the title of his book on Plato implied a parallelism with the struggle of the National Socialists for political power.⁵⁶

Amidst the inevitable differences in the George-Circle's interpretation of Plato, it is nevertheless possible to find interpretative paradigms which originated in the circle and went on to influence academic discourse, driving innovation in contemporary scholarship on Plato. The George-Circle's claims to have discovered a holistic Plato, purified from the western tradition, set a precedent.⁵⁷ Their studies made a significant contribution to the rehabilitation of

51 Singer (1920).

52 Singer (1927).

53 Salin (1921).

54 Hildebrandt (1922). On Hildebrandt more broadly see Breuer (2012) and Pohle (2017), with further reading; Raulff (2007), 122–139, 361–373.

55 Cf. Wolters (1930), 395.

56 Cf. Hildebrandt (1933) and Lane (2011), 146–150, in the section entitled: "Hildebrandt Redux: Plato, Nietzsche, and the Nazis, with Caveats".

57 Cf. Brecht (1929), 57–58.

the reputation of the first Alexandrian, as Nietzsche had called Plato. They supported the rediscovery of the Platonic Socrates and fostered interest in his unwritten teachings.⁵⁸ The circle's concept of the form (*Gestalt-Begriff*), developed by Friedrich Wolters in the second issue of the *Jahrbuch für die geistige Bewegung* (*Yearbook for the Spiritual Movement*), had a decisive impact.⁵⁹ Here, the poet and his work appear as a timeless figure, one not to be biographically described and analytically dissected, but rather recognized and "perceived" as an individual spiritual form. Friedemann had already claimed that "Plato's God" is "the form [...] which was no longer accessible to logic which had been detached from the unity of life".⁶⁰ Subsequently, there was a move against separating Platonic philosophy into a multiplicity of academic disciplines—logic, aesthetics, ethics; these were rather to be understood as a unity. That which had been "discovered by the intellect", Friedemann wrote, must be "filled with the impulse of the undivided life-unity";⁶¹ Salin distanced himself from the rational contemplation of sets of causes and utilitarian perspectives, and demanded that the nature of being be explored as a "moulded form".⁶²

However, two of the George-Circle's interpretative paradigms appear to have been of particular significance: first, a new concept of education was created drawing on Platonic *eros*; second, the political Plato helped the circle (and not only them) to transcend the esoteric community, and to develop the concept of a new "state" or "realm".

Friedemann had already emphasized *eros* as the binding thread between master and disciple. Plato shaped disciples through love, following the example of Socrates.⁶³ The disciples are also lovers, as Singer had highlighted: "For Plato, the idea ends at the point at which he recognized the meaning of *eros* to be the desire to immortalize the mortal through creation on all levels in the realm of the beautiful".⁶⁴ The road to creation is pederasty; the body itself is not relinquished in the ascent to the idea of the Beautiful: "Thus, Diotima announces to you, the servant of god ascends the levels from corporeal base to incorporeal height, and he first replenishes with his own pattern his own beloved—he who

58 Brecht (1929), 58, 68–69.

59 Gundolf and Wolters (1911), 137 ff.

60 Friedemann (1914), 65, 100.

61 Friedemann (1914), 32.

62 Salin (1921), 9.

63 Friedemann (1914), 121.

64 Singer (1927), 48: "Für Platon endet der Gedanke dort, wo er den Sinn des Eros erkannt hat als Willen zur Verewigung des Sterblings durch Zeugen im Schönen auf allen Stufen".

is bodily embraced and excitedly perceived in his beauty".⁶⁵ Plato's Socrates too reclined with attractive boys, drank, philosophized, and drank some more, in order then to exalt pederasty. "That is the life-breath of Socratic-Platonic philosophy: Socrates requests youths, attractive youths, and their beauty is valid, even if their wisdom is not yet noticeable",⁶⁶ claimed Hildebrandt, who would, in a 1954 article on "Agape and Eros in George", still wax lyrical on "love which builds companionship" and the "formative *eros*" of the poet.⁶⁷

This is more than the sublimation of youth-cult, the deification of the body, and homosexuality. The aim was to develop a "socio-political educational Utopia".⁶⁸ According to Friedemann, an education based on Plato's philosophy taught "that man must grow up full of life: not mentally arranging dead material but rather creatively fathering a new spirit".⁶⁹ Salin assented: education ought to cultivate the pupil in the image of god, "so that the god is made corporeal in him, and he portrays the god in this world." True education was, from this viewpoint, no bashful connivance and even less a haphazard presentation of knowledge, "but rather an active and demanding act of cultivation and forging".⁷⁰

This concept of education had far-reaching political implications. It is no wonder that, at the latest since Singer's 1927 *Platon der Gründer*, aesthetic questions began to arise in the background: there was a fascination with this political Plato. *Eros* became the power which founds the state: "Friendship of the spirit, of the soul, and along with it the foundation of the political state",⁷¹ wrote Hildebrandt. Plato was now the leader who called for action (*der Führer zur Tat*). The progress of political meaning in the George-Circle ran parallel to the political convulsions of the Weimar Republic. In Hildebrand's book, *Plato: The Spirit's Struggle for Power (Platon: Der Kampf des Geistes um die Macht, 1933)*, the subject no longer concerned mastery over a band of disciples, but rather real power; a new empire. Hildebrandt was certain that "Plato never intended to found an academic school; rather, he required disciples characterized by unconditional loyalty, with whom he could determine the constitution and realize the new spirit."⁷² However, with the death of Dion, Plato's dream of real-

65 Friedemann (1914), 62; cf. Salin (1921), 112–113.

66 Hildebrandt (1933), 92.

67 Hildebrandt (1964), 101; cf. p. 84: "Through *eros* man can be granted experience of the divine. But true epiphany of the divine, its appearance, can only occur in society."

68 Mattenklott (2001), 247.

69 Friedemann (1914), 54.

70 Salin (1921), 13, 28.

71 Hildebrandt (1933), 386.

72 Hildebrandt (1933), 92.

izing his *Politeia* came to an end. Here, too, Hildebrandt had an answer: “The academy was a spiritual state; initially intended to be the germ of the political state, but gradually, unintentionally, it passed into the epoch of spiritual realms”.⁷³

If Plato was the redeeming leader who mediated between God and man, then university teachers ought no longer to be the heralds of his message; these should rather be statesmen who had been trained in an academy. The purpose of the academy was recognized to be the education of philosopher-kings, rather than the acquisition of pure doctrine.⁷⁴ Dion was, in turn, the “sure actor” (*sichere Täter*) selected by Plato, who “ought to have given a new direction to one city [Athens] and thereby to the entire Hellenic world”, as Renata von Scheliha put it in 1934.⁷⁵ This concept of the *politeia* unilaterally accentuated “the disintegrated, centrifugal, cultish aspect of the Platonic *politeia*”,⁷⁶ and coincided with some tenets of National Socialist ideology.⁷⁷

Hildebrandt, who joined the Nazi Party in May 1933, and was subsequently appointed professor of philosophy at Kiel University,⁷⁸ praised Plato as the father of eugenics and the key authority on selective breeding. In Plato’s *Politeia*, Hildebrandt detected the ideal combination of intellectual education and biological selection which resulted in the production of an aristocratic elite. Hildebrandt’s philosophical interpretations of Plato and his “aesthetic fundamentalism” reflected and legitimized key elements of National Socialist ideology.⁷⁹ In his lengthy preface to August Horneffer’s translation of the *Politeia* into German, which was published in 1933 and—with some purges—reprinted even after 1945,⁸⁰ he criticized the democratic chaos of Athens, praised Plato’s philosophical concept of the new man, and emphasized the importance of eugenics for the political revival of Germany. The ideal state had to guarantee that “spirit and blood merge in unity” (*Geist und Blut verschmelzen zur Einheit*).⁸¹

73 Hildebrandt (1933), 293.

74 Hildebrandt (1933), 153.

75 Scheliha (1934), VII.

76 Schwindt (2000), 37.

77 Cf. Orozco (1994).

78 Cf. Tilitzki (2002), 621 ff.

79 Breuer (2005), 307.

80 *Platon: Der Staat. Deutsch von August Horneffer, eingeleitet von Kurt Hildebrandt*, Leipzig, 1933 (Stuttgart, 1951¹⁰). On this, see Oexle (2002), 12.

81 *Platon*, 1951¹⁰, p. xxxv. For more on the reception of Plato under the Nazis in general, see Alan Kim’s chapter in this volume.

The idea, however, that the creative entirety of Plato's work could not be comprehended by academia alone was influential not only in the George-Circle's presentation of Plato, but also in Platonic scholarship of the 1920s, both in the history of philosophy and in classical scholarship. Intuition was required. Attempts were made, through the analysis of form and style, to penetrate to the form (*Gestalt*) and the essence of the Platonic work. The "kernel of the new understanding of Plato", in the view of Hans-Georg Gadamer, centers on Plato the educator and founder, on "*paideia*" and education, on proximity to the state and community, and indeed on the road to education.⁸² This can be confirmed by a glance at the works published in 1928: that year saw Werner Jaeger's programmatic lectures on Plato's position in the structure of Greek education published as a pamphlet;⁸³ simultaneously, two books on Plato appeared which could be seen as implementations of this program, and which moreover addressed those themes which the authors of the George-Circle had often stressed. The first was *Plato the Educator* by the philosopher Julius Stenzel;⁸⁴ the latter was the first volume of Paul Friedländer's monograph on Plato.⁸⁵ Characteristic of both works is their agreement with Jaeger in expressly referring to the idea of *paideia*, and exploring the significance of education for society. All three authors stress their debt to the philological research of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and follow his authority in philological matters; for them, too, the authenticity of the seventh letter was uncontested. Jaeger, Stenzel, and Friedländer were at the same time aware of the narrowness of the traditional philological viewpoint. They believed that the approach to Platonic philosophy was obstructed by philologically specialized research and by a history of philosophy that had been written by academic philosophers; in its place, they urged for an intellectual exploration of Platonic texts based on precise philological study.⁸⁶ Here, we have reached the central question: the influence of the George-Circle on the *Altertumswissenschaften*.

Influences

The avant-garde "re-reading" of the Greek philosopher in the George-Circle was directed against the Platonic exegesis of classical philology; it was against this

82 Gadamer (1933), 63 / Gadamer (1985), 212.

83 Jaeger (1928).

84 Stenzel (1928a, 1928b); cf. Pohle (2017), 272 ff.

85 Friedländer (1928/30); cf. Pohle (2017), 278 ff.

86 Manasse (1957), 12–13.

group that Ludwig Hatvany, a Hungarian doctoral student writing a dissertation at the world-famous Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin in the early twentieth century, directed his notorious jibes: “the philologist lives in the erroneous delusion that ancient works can create their own intrinsic value, if only the question of reading methodology is clarified”.⁸⁷ The historicization of antiquity in the industry of academia had nothing in common with the neo-classicist glorification and the neo-humanist idealization of antiquity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, August Boeckh had left no doubt that the culture of the Greeks and the Romans was the basis of the entirety of education. Such a normative treatment of antiquity was foreign to his followers in the *Kaiserreich*. Their modern realism demolished the special importance of the Greeks, which had attained the status of a much-loved certainty for the educated middle-classes. At the same time, the dramatic broadening of the source-material had far-reaching consequences for classical studies in Germany. On the one hand, the divinatory power of the spirit, which Boeckh had still evoked, had become obsolete. There was a demand for strict documentary evidence; every thesis had to be tested against the sources. On the other hand, a multiplicity of individual problems moved into the foreground. Every increase in knowledge, however small, served to help scholars to affirm their own academic worth. Plato’s theory of forms received as much attention as his “night-clock”.⁸⁸

The George-Circle had also announced its opposition to relativism and pluralism of values. There was agreement with Nietzsche’s view that the role of history was to serve life. In the crisis of academia there was a campaign against philological pedantry and philosophical hairsplitting.⁸⁹ Plato was required to polemicize against established academia and to call for a comprehensive reform of education. Ulrich von Willamowitz-Moellendorff was the first to get caught in the critical cross-fire.⁹⁰ The aim of the George-Circle, as Hildebrandt stressed in 1910, was to grasp the foreignness of the past, in contrast to the historicist position of Wilamowitz.⁹¹ This despite the fact that Wilamowitz too had attempted to overcome the neo-classicizing vision of the Greeks, and had repeatedly demanded that philology must seek the cultural inheritance of Greco-Roman antiquity as a whole, heathen as well as Christian: *cognitio totius antiquitatis*.⁹² There were also similarities in their approach to

87 Hatvany (1911), 17.

88 On this see Rebenich (2000); further Rebenich (2008).

89 Cf. the evidence in Starke (1959), 22–23.

90 Weigand (1971); Schwindt (2000), 35 ff.; Mattenklott (2001), 245 ff.

91 Cf. Hildebrandt (1910).

92 Cf. Rebenich (2001).

Plato: Wilamowitz argued for the authenticity of the famous seventh letter and defended it as a genuine document for Plato's life and works. Moreover, in his two-volume biography of Plato, which appeared in 1919,⁹³ Wilamowitz celebrated the unequal nature of humans as well as an elitist model of the state.⁹⁴ Arnaldo Momigliano has already observed that "[Wilamowitz's] Plato anticipates that of Stefan George's students [...] in being a *Führer*".⁹⁵ But the George-Circle's invective against Wilamowitz,⁹⁶ which became a point of cultural dogma, obscures the influence which the circle did in fact exert through the Berlin Hellenist, whose writings naturally received a great deal of attention.

But the fight between George and Wilamowitz about the "correct" vision of antiquity and Plato, fanned not least by the vanity of both parties, went back a long way. The young Wilamowitz had polemicized fiercely against Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, and later against George himself, in luscious satires which poked fun at his "banality of impotence" (*Mausegrau der Impotenz*).⁹⁷ The poet's subjects paid him back in the same coin. Wilamowitz's Plato monograph was called a "popular romance for old spinsters" (*Marlittbuch für alte Jungfern*) and "Plato for serving-girls" (*Platon für Dienstmädchen*).⁹⁸ "Wilamops" had failed to grasp the heroic element in Plato's thought, and had merely sought the modern world in the Athens of the fifth century B.C.⁹⁹ In fact, the Protestant *Junker* considered every state to be based upon order; "the official of the Platonic state is an academically-trained soldier or a militarily-trained man of academia. Healthy is the state that is ruled by such officials."¹⁰⁰ In their attack on Wilamowitz, the George-acolytes distanced themselves not only from the historical methods of university philology, but also more generally from the Protestant establishment, which equated Athens and Prussia, and continued to dream of the splendor of the Attic Empire even during the crisis of the Weimar Republic.

93 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1919); cf. Pohle (2017), 163 ff.

94 Cf. Parente (1973); Canfora (1985), 64 ff. / Canfora (1995), 71 ff.

95 "[I]l suo Platone anticipa quello degli allievi di Stefan George [...] nell'essere un Führer", A. Momigliano, "Premesse per una discussione su Wilamowitz" [1973], cited in Momigliano (1980), 348.

96 Harder (1930), 976.

97 Cf. Goldschmidt (1985), 587–588; Goldschmidt (1989); Karlauf (2007), 438 ff.

98 Wolters (1930), 487. E. Marlitt was the pseudonym of Eugenie John (1825–1887), author of popular novels for a largely female audience.

99 Wolters (1930), 487.

100 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1919), 438–439.

The rebellion of the avant-garde in the 1920s shocked the self-appointed custodians of the old system to the core. An example is Leisegang's shrill attack on the contemporary interpretation of Plato in the George-Circle. He speaks of a throng of pretty sentences, of the gnostic violation of Plato, of inadequate knowledge of the language,¹⁰¹ and finally complains of the "rigid seriousness", the "hollow pathos" and the "arduously acquired aristocratic nature of George's neo-Romantic disciples, who take themselves so immensely seriously, as if the rehabilitation of Western culture depended on them alone." All this is incompatible with the "amicable cheerfulness of the born aristocrat" Plato.¹⁰² Others spoke of "orgies of irrationalism",¹⁰³ and Wilamowitz—who had already prevented Gundolf from being called to a chair in Berlin in 1920—failed Hildebrandt's habilitation at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität eight years later.¹⁰⁴

The established philologists' view of themselves as distinct, however, was just as unconvincing as the outsider-role so cherished by the George-Circle. In fact, it would be an error to suppose that such anathemas could have prevented the reception of the avant-garde interpretation of Plato in the *Altertumswissenschaften*. In the 1920s, the old Wilamowitz looked on helplessly as his best students defected to the opposing camp, as Paul Friedländer, Werner Jaeger, and Karl Reinhardt (to name only three) returned to the central elements of the George-Circle's Plato interpretation for their conception of modern research into antiquity. A revealing piece of evidence comes from Paul Friedländer himself, dating from 1921, which its first editor, William M. Calder III, aptly described as "The Credo of a New Generation".¹⁰⁵ It is a document of emancipation: "Had I not surrendered myself to you so strongly before, the separation would not be so painful". Friedländer owed his liberation from his once so overpowering, now forcibly retired professor to Nietzsche (who had influenced Friedländer's view of life from an early stage and increasingly as the years went by, and had particularly helped him shape his opinion on history), Jacob Burckhardt and Heinrich Wölfflin (who placed entirely new demands on the comprehension of a work), and finally to Stefan George, who in recent years had brought about "the greatest disruption and the most forceful redistribution

101 Leisegang (1929), 48 ff.

102 Leisegang (1929), 153–154.

103 Harder (1930), 975.

104 Cf. Groppe (2001), 550 ff.; Tilitzki (2002), 336 f.

105 Cf. Calder and Huß (1999), 141 ff.

of all powers".¹⁰⁶ Thus, in Friedländer's Los Angeles office, a photo of George hung next to one of Wilamowitz.¹⁰⁷

Friedländer, born in 1882, numbers among those ambitious young academics from the circle of Wilamowitz's students¹⁰⁸ who were deeply affected by the First World War and the crisis of the Weimar Republic. They sought new approaches which could conquer the power of historicism in the disciplines which explored antiquity and close the gap between academia and life. "Unlike others, I could not simply start again where I had left off in 1914," Friedländer wrote to his teacher.¹⁰⁹ He reproached traditional philology for its textual criticism, its obsessive examination of individual details, and its failure to seek out interconnections, to inquire into the totality of a "work" and its "form". Distinguishing himself from Wilamowitz, Friedländer pursued philosophical problems and turned to Plato the Philosopher, whom Wilamowitz had intentionally excluded from his biography. In 1921, Friedländer pleaded for the authenticity of the "great Alcibiades" which Wilamowitz had contested. Seven years later, his great two-volume work on Plato appeared, dedicated to Wilamowitz.¹¹⁰ Here he wanted to "make form, structure, and shape visible both in their entirety and individually" and to understand the totality of the "work" as a creation that was to be abstracted from the historical actor and his circumstances, as he states in his introduction. His interest was no longer in *becoming* and *having become*, which had been central to August Boeckh's understanding of the task of *Altertumswissenschaft*,¹¹¹ but rather in *being*; here, what counted for Friedländer were those objective modes of thought in which the "form" (*Gestalt*) manifested itself. Friedländer drew his concept of the form (*Gestaltbegriff*) from Plato's theory of the forms (*Ideenlehre*); in this respect, his thought is comparable to that of Friedemann. Thus, he examined the spiritual forms and eternal essence of Platonic philosophy, the relationship between the truth of existence (*Seinswahrheit*) and the reality of life (*Lebenswirklichkeit*); to quote the subtitle of the first volume, he investigated "Eidos", "Paideia", and "Dialogos"; to quote the chapter headings, he described "daimon", "arrheton", "irony", and "myth". These counted "as the inner expressions of the individual spiritual form, instead of the biography, which filled Wilamowitz's first volume".¹¹² Of

106 Calder and Huß (1999), 143.

107 Bühler (1969), 623.

108 Cf. Vogt (1995), and Hölscher (1995).

109 Calder and Huß (1999), 144.

110 Friedländer (1928/30).

111 Cf. Rebenich (2000), 478–479.

112 Hölscher (1995), 72.

course, Friedländer's work included reference to the historical context, but his aesthetic grasp of the Platonic writings—which he interpreted in the manner of poetry, and in which he saw the most perfect artistic achievement of all Greek literature—was decisive. Thereby the Platonic world, like the world of all art, possessed an absolute presentness, the historicity of its creator notwithstanding.¹¹³

Friedländer based his work on that of Werner Jaeger (born in 1888), who, despite his personal distance,¹¹⁴ did not remain uninfluenced by the interpretative paradigms of the George-Circle.¹¹⁵ Jaeger, who replaced Wilamowitz in his chair at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, was shocked that Wilamowitz considered himself capable of acting as an artistic judge of Greek poetry, but that he took the philosophical element—the center-piece of Platonic exegesis—from the philologists and allocated it to academic philosophers. But Jaeger's contradictions ran still deeper. He attempted to save Humanism—which had been rejected by Wilamowitz—for western culture by making Greek philosophy, rather than rhetoric and aesthetics, the basis of the so-called "Third Humanism".¹¹⁶ Plato was central for this wide-ranging plan, because Jaeger viewed his philosophy as the zenith of Greek intellectual history. For Jaeger, the essence of Plato's philosophy was "*Paideia*".¹¹⁷

After the First World War, Jaeger advocated a system of humanistic pedagogy from which only a small elite was supposed to profit. His interpretation of the theory of forms, his concept of community, and his advocacy of an elite *politeia* are comprehensible only against the background of the George-Circle's reception of Plato. Jaeger was fascinated by the idea of a charismatic community of belief which did not rest on reason, but rather on the collective feeling of a few well educated people. In this, he stood in open contradiction to Paul Natorp's reading of Plato. The neo-Kantian from Marburg had attempted a wide-ranging democratization of pedagogy around the turn of the century, and interpreted Plato as a forerunner of socialism, who placed community and the principle of justice above the individual and his own interests. For Natorp, Plato is the key witness against the educated aristocracy, and the precursor of an "aristocracy in workers' overalls" which embraced all of humanity.¹¹⁸ By contrast, in Jaeger's *Paideia* the focus was above all on an elite code of political ethics, on a political

113 Cf. Gadamer (1933), 75.

114 Cf. Hildebrandt (1965), 189, n. 27.

115 Cf. Manasse (1957), 6 ff.

116 Cf. Calder (1990).

117 Cf. Jaeger (1959), 343–344.

118 Cf. Follak (2005).

humanism which schooled students in the ethos of the state, and on the subjection of the individual to the state or, in Jaegers words: “on the formation of the unrestrained ego into a normative vision of man” and on the “education of the individualized ego into a supra-individual humanity”.¹¹⁹

Also of note is Karl Reinhardt, born in 1886. In 1927, in his book on Plato's myths, Reinhardt explored the connection between *mythos* and *logos* with a pathos worthy of George himself.¹²⁰ In his 1921 book on Posidonius he aimed to bring out the Hellenistic author's “inner form”, which was understood not as petrified, but rather as a vital force, to which one could still relate.¹²¹ In the inner form, he argued, it should be possible to see the relationship of any fragment to the entirety.

Rather than following this line of enquiry, however, it is worth taking a brief look beyond classical philology to philosophy or, more precisely, the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer, born in 1900, received his doctorate in 1922 under Natorp's supervision with a study on “the Nature of Desire in the Platonic Dialogues” (*Das Wesen der Lust in den platonischen Dialogen*). His encounter with Martin Heidegger in 1923 led to a deep uncertainty. Gadamer broke off his philosophical studies and turned to classical philology. In 1927 he took the state exams in his new field. Two years later, he presented his habilitation under Heidegger's supervision with a study of “Plato's Dialectical Ethics”.¹²² Gadamer's vision of Plato is, however, not only indebted to neo-Kantianism and Heidegger. Gadamer was influenced by Paul Friedländer and, moreover, by Jaeger, Stenzel, and Reinhardt. It was through their works that he learned to differentiate between Plato and Platonism. Thus, he attempted to rediscover Plato's original intention; that is, the real and original questions Plato had posed. One aspect of this attempt was Gadamer's development of a philologically-based interpretation of Plato, which sought to bring out the timelessness and contemporary relevance of Platonic concepts, and to advocate Platonic thought itself against certain aspects of its reception. In brief: Gadamer discovered that “Plato was no Platonist”. This sentence offers *in nuce*, as François Renaud has noted, the critical essence of Gadamer's Platonic hermeneutics.¹²³

119 Jaeger (1925); cf. Bressa (2001), 86.

120 Reinhardt (1927).

121 Reinhardt (1921), 1.

122 Cf. Gadamer (1985), 3–163; Pöggeler (1997).

123 Renaud (1999), 12.

Gadamer grappled with Plato several times in the 1930s and 1940s.¹²⁴ In January 1934, he gave a lecture to the Society of the Friends of the Humanistic Gymnasium in Marburg on “Plato and the Poets”, in which he explored Plato’s polemic against poets and sophists, and interpreted the society of the Platonic Academy not as a “research community unrelated to the state”, but rather as a “place for the education of the political individual”.¹²⁵ Platonic *paideia* was thus a countermovement “against the disruptive force of the nature of the state, which was being attacked by the powers of the Enlightenment”.¹²⁶ In 1942 he published his essay on “*Platos Staat der Erziehung*” (“Plato’s Educational State”) in a volume of essays on the military service of the humanities (*der Kriegseinsatz der Geisteswissenschaften*). The theme, which Gadamer developed from his readings of Plato’s *Politeia*, was the decline of the state into tyranny and, as a way out of this crisis, the construction of just rule. Criticism of tyranny and a demand for justice—this sounds like political opposition. In reality, however, it was about finding a new means to legitimize and reinforce an authoritarian regime that no longer enjoyed the trust of the people, in order to preserve “inner unity in an atmosphere of potential resentment”, an “educated leadership (*Führertum*)” which would govern justly. Exercised in this form, power would bind and tie both the leader (*Führer*) and the led (*Geführte*), and would constitute just government rather than arbitrary rule.¹²⁷ In the contemporary National Socialist world, this statement stood opposed to Carl Schmitt’s Friend/Enemy schema, but at the same time picked up on the political and social discourse of the 1920s, which was decisively influenced by the George-Circle, and which Gadamer also reflected in his presentation of “Plato and the Poets”.

Conclusion

The George-Circle insinuated its anti-historicist understanding of the humanities and its avant-garde lifestyle into the spheres of middle-class academia through numerous different routes. Even if the ideal of the poet-scholar was not formative for all the young academics who engaged with Stefan George,

124 Here see several texts reprinted in vol. v of the *Gesammelte Werke* (1985), particularly on “Die neue Platoforschung” (1933), “Plato und die Dichter” (1934), and “Platos Staat der Erziehung”. See also Orozco (1995), Wolin (2001) and Hausmann (2001).

125 Gadamer (1985), 197.

126 Gadamer (1985), 201.

127 Gadamer (1985), 249 ff.; cf. Hausmann (2007), 128–129.

their own work was molded by elements of the George-Circle's epistemology. The circle's influence should therefore not be underestimated. It manifested itself, above all following the First World War, by means of central concepts and methods, as can be demonstrated via the example of the interpretation of Plato.¹²⁸

The circle's interpretation of Plato influenced the disciplines of philology and philosophy, which henceforth believed that a political and educational goal could be identified in Plato's philosophy.¹²⁹ The "back to Plato" movement which found broad currency in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century was initiated by the George-Circle. George's acolytes succeeded in breaking away from Nietzsche's equation of Plato's thought with the Platonic tradition, and thereby rediscovered Plato. Their rejection of the analytical approach of the Enlightenment strengthened the power of intuition in the interpretation of Plato; understanding of form and style became important; Plato the politician became the subject of research, and an important consequence was the discussion of the "unwritten doctrine". But Plato's philosophy was at the same time read as the antidote to persistent social and economic crisis. Not only after 1933, but even after 1945, people were of the view that an elite education which drew on Plato would form an aristocratic individual. And Plato's *Politeia* was the basis for political utopias opposed to the established system of parliamentary democracy. After 1933, some committed advocates of the new understanding of Plato became fervent National Socialists.¹³⁰ Academic innovation and political reaction thus constitute the two sides of the intellectual coin discussed here: the reception of Plato in the George-Circle.

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¹²⁸ Cf. Groppe (2001), 625; cf. also Oexle (2003), 28 ff.; Schlieben (2004).

¹²⁹ Gadamer (1985), 332.

¹³⁰ Cf. Orozco (1994); also Alan Kim's chapter in this volume.

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An Antique Echo: Plato and the Nazis

Alan Kim

“Anschauungen ohne Begriffe sind blind.”

KANT



Introduction

Plato and the Nazis. That fatal little word, “and”, raises a host of questions. Why, of all philosophers, did the Nazis gravitate towards Plato? Is it because there is an inalienable totalitarian element in his thought? Were the Nazis right to see in Plato justification and authority for their worldview? If so, how can we continue reading or praising Plato? Must he, as has been said of Heidegger, be banished from the library’s Philosophy section, and reshelfed under the “History of National Socialism”? To call Plato a proto-fascist may sound shocking, not least because it suggests that the Nazis were right and had found the key to Plato. Of course, this is false: their readings are without exception forced, anachronistic, politically charged, and blind to contrary evidence. Yet we cannot leave the matter there. The questions nag: why *were* the Nazis so attracted by, even obsessed with Plato? Did the attraction follow upon their misreadings and distortions? Or did it come first, so that what we see as distortions were in fact attempts to cleanse their idol of ideological impurities? The latter seems more probable, since it is hard to imagine them having independent reasons for reading Plato, and only later finding him ideologically useful. Hence there was an antecedent attraction, and so, too, a reason for it that preceded the Nazi scholars’ grosser hermeneutic interventions. What could this reason have been? How could and did Plato come to seem a prophet of National Socialism?

This, then, is the task of my chapter: to explore the affinity between Plato and National Socialism, an affinity lying beneath the later distortions. In other words, I will investigate the possibility that—even if we agree that Plato does not advocate and cannot be used to justify book-burnings, human vivisection,

genocide,¹ or unrestrained wars of conquest—his works might nevertheless resonate with a “metaphysical National Socialism.”² I shall not pursue my task by trying to sniff out a notional fascist essence in the dialogues themselves, but will concretely examine how German readers in fact distilled such an essence—*Gestalt*—in a sequence of phases from the turn of the twentieth century through the early 1930s. I will show the apolitical, philosophical origins of this process, which merges with the political crisis-discourse of the period. Unless we are clear about the importance of *Gestalt* and its political implications, we will be stuck in anachronistic debates over whether Plato’s thought is “totalitarian”, or totalitarianism “Platonic”.³ Instead I will show how, in the texts of Platonizing Nazis, “*Gestalt*” is everywhere at work. What begins in the 1910s and 1920s as a defensible interpretive goal, namely the rehabilitation of intuition as a mode of cognition over against discursive thought, becomes wedded to a political movement, National Socialism, which also privileges intuition over discourse, visions over concepts. This marriage results in a metaphysical National Socialism rooted in such *Gestalt*-notions as *Blut*, *Volk*, and *Staat* that are essentially immune to critique. I conclude that it is the eclipse of dialogue and critique that separates metaphysical National Socialism from Plato’s actual philosophy, and that, despite appearances, he was no kind of Nazi at all.

Historical Background

In today’s politics, references to classical antiquity are few and far between. Why would any Greek philosopher play a role in the formation of a modern political movement, especially one as brutal and anti-intellectual as National Socialism? First, due to the influence of nineteenth-century humanism, Greeks and Romans loomed much larger on the educational horizon than they do today. In German-speaking lands, the Greek grip on the imagination was so

1 Popper (1994), 161.

2 Orozco (1995), iv.

3 Cf. esp. Popper (1994), 161, 84–85. With his opposition between “closed” and “open” societies, Popper adverts to the contrast I develop in this paper between a holistic *Gestalt*-ideology, on the one hand, and an open-ended practice of dialectic, on the other. Inasmuch as Popper accurately discerns the outlines of Plato’s holism, he essentially agrees with his totalitarian enemies that Plato’s metaphysics and politics are both governed by *Gestalt*-holism. I would not so readily hand Plato over to the enemy camp (cf. my conclusion below, also Kaufmann 1951, 465–466). This chapter is not, however, the place for a detailed refutation of Popper.

strong that Eliza M. Butler speaks of the “tyranny of Greece over Germany”,⁴ and, as Glenn Most writes, the classical scholar enjoyed cultural prestige similar to that of the molecular biologist today.⁵ Greek art, literature, and philosophy formed the basis of an educated, “cultured” (*gebildet*) citizenry, the so-called *Bildungsbürgertum*. Thus, because of Plato’s centrality to Greek culture and hence to humanism, the Nazis had to coopt him, not only to convince skeptical *Bildungsbürger* of Nazism’s intellectual legitimacy, but also to undermine the universalist pretensions of bourgeois humanism itself.⁶ This is the “outer”, socio-political reason for Nazi interest in Plato. But while many (if not most) Nazis saw in him a propaganda tool, he was also an essential part of the self-image of Nazi intellectuals. This second, “inner” concern requires a brief review of German Platonic scholarship in the early twentieth century.

In the battle that raged at the turn of the century between idealists and positivists over science, logic, method, and culture, the idealists fought under the banner of their forerunner, Plato.⁷ The Marburg Neo-Kantian, Paul Natorp, epitomizes this idealistic reading. In his 1903 work, *Platos Ideenlehre*,⁸ he argues that Platonic forms are not immaterial substances which we “see” by intellectual intuition, but rather laws laid down by discursive thought, with reference to which we determine items in the sensible world.⁹ Natorp and his friend, Edmund Husserl, share the view that philosophy’s main role is scientific, either as “critique” of science, or as a rigorous science in its own right. Unlike Natorp, however, Husserl sees philosophy as striving towards “eidetic intuition”, that is, the mental discernment of the essential structures of consciousness. While Husserl does not himself identify these essences with Platonic forms, their apodictic “evidence” to phenomenological vision bears more than a passing resemblance to the soul’s vision of the forms described by Plato.¹⁰ The basic opposition between neo-Kantianism’s discursive and Phenomenology’s intuitive Plato will play a central role in understanding both the genesis and failure of the National Socialist appropriation of Plato.

4 Butler (1935).

5 Most (1994).

6 See Gadamer’s review of Jaeger (1928) at Gadamer (1933), 228.

7 Natorp (1994), viii–ix. Bambach also notes the neo-Kantian background of the Nazi politicization of Plato (Bambach 2003, 203–204).

8 Reprinted as Natorp (1994).

9 According to Popper (1994, 29), Plato was a “methodological essentialist” who believed that “essences may be discovered and discerned with the help of intellectual intuition”. Popper’s claim is contestable.

10 See Kim (2004, 2010).

This scientific reading of Plato comes under attack by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the greatest classical scholar of his time, and Stefan George, the poet.¹¹ Despite their deep differences,¹² both see Plato as a political thinker, if not a leader, and his motive as conservative and aristocratic. Wilamowitz lays aside metaphysical and epistemological matters, so as to bring out Plato, the man, rather than his thoughts¹³—a goal diametrically opposed to Natorp's.¹⁴ Although, as a historicist,¹⁵ Wilamowitz aims to interpret ancient texts in context, yet in his attempt to reconstruct Plato's frame of mind as an aristocratic genius confronting the turmoil of Athens, Wilamowitz reflects his own *fin-de-siècle* crisis-consciousness.¹⁶

Drawing parallels between fifth-century Athens and Germany, their old orders shattered by war and undermined by democracy, Wilamowitz praises Solon, Plato's ancestor, who in imposing measure on the herd-like masses, remained immune to "all corrosion of doubt and ... the narcosis of mysticism".¹⁷ Solon's "utterly clear vision" epitomizes the classical ideal,¹⁸ an ethos governing the noble houses of Athens: "Despite the predominance of democracy, upbringing [*Zucht*] at home was free of the enervating weakness of modern pedagogy".¹⁹ Thus Wilamowitz at once criticizes modern and ancient democracy and praises ancient and modern aristocratic discipline (*Zucht*).²⁰ By contrast, Athenian democracy was founded by Cleisthenes, whose abstract thought is a common fault "among the fathers of schematically devised constitutions",²¹ who lack the noble's clear view of all things, including of the unruly *Volk*. In the same vein, Wilamowitz laments the aftermath of Versailles, where "ochlocracy" (mob rule) has resulted in "the self-destruction and self-emasculation of my

11 Cf. Cassirer (1955), 72.

12 See Goldsmith (1985), 606, n. 88.

13 Wilamowitz (1929), 3; cf. 4, 8. See Gadamer (1942), 249.

14 Natorp (1994), vii.

15 I use the term "historicism" in its usual, quasi-positivist sense, viz., the view that the study of history must be conducted with primary attention to local facts and context, and thus in a sense opposite to that which Popper gives it, viz., "the doctrine that history is controlled by ... laws whose discovery would enable us to prophesy the destiny of man" (Popper 1994, 8). It is a view Popper ascribes to *Plato* (Popper 1994, 83; cf. esp. 31); Wilamowitz does not hold such a doctrine.

16 Cf. Popper (1994), 38.

17 Wilamowitz (1929), 18. cf. Popper (1994), 18.

18 Wilamowitz (1929), 18.

19 Wilamowitz (1929), 41.

20 Wilamowitz (1929), 41.

21 Wilamowitz (1929), 20–21.

people".²² He tastes his own bitterness in Plato's reaction to the collapse of his world and the rise of an alien modernity.

Despite his projection of anti-democratic, nationalist views upon Plato, we must carefully distinguish Wilamowitz's political reading from those of later conservatives, fixing it as a "reasonable" baseline against which to judge degrees of extremism that will later merge into Nazism. It is important to note, therefore, that despite his Prussian sympathy with Plato's conservatism, Wilamowitz is always guided by a scientific (*wissenschaftlich*) interest.²³ Even at the end of the First World War, he argues we must "keep faith with [Plato]" as members of a "worldwide association [*Weltbund*]" and an "international spiritual knight-hood" of scholars, all "investigating the culture that is the common ground of all our national and *equal* cultures, cultures that *complete each other*".²⁴ Insofar as Plato personifies free scientific inquiry, the study of Plato itself is for Wilamowitz a European, not a specifically German project.

Yet, on Wilamowitz's biographical approach, Plato appears as a *Wissenschaftler* who, paradoxically, was not motivated by *Wissenschaft*: "Plato was not merely a professor of philosophy, who could only be understood by colleagues: he wanted to be something more", namely "to have an effect on the world, to work for the world, to be politically effective",²⁵ and thus "lead the human soul to its salvation".²⁶ Perhaps Wilamowitz is thinking of himself when he observes that Plato was a reluctant "teacher and writer", roles he considered a "most bitter renunciation" forced on him by fate: instead, he should have become a statesman; *Wissenschaft* was but the training-ground for that true vocation.²⁷ Thus Wilamowitz understood himself and Plato as conservative, skeptical men of science, committed to noble action, not abstraction.

But Wilamowitz's ideal was on the wane; in its stead, Stefan George and his Circle introduced Plato the political prophet.²⁸ Since Stefan Rebenich treats the Georgian Plato in the previous chapter, I shall summarize here just those aspects important for understanding the later Nazi readings.²⁹ For George, the

22 Wilamowitz (1929), vi.

23 Wilamowitz (1929), 4. But see his reservations concerning the possibility of reconstructing his "individuality", Wilamowitz (1929), 710.

24 Wilamowitz (1929), iv–v.

25 Wilamowitz (1929), 711.

26 Wilamowitz (1929), 3; for a similar claim from the Georgians, cf. Singer (1927), 101.

27 Wilamowitz (1929), 16.

28 "Every creative man is prophetic through *Gestalt*, not only through his speech" (Singer 1927, 255).

29 See also the detailed analysis in Chapter 6 of Kim (2010).

poet functions as a mystagogue. He is a *maître de vérité*, to use Marcel Detienne's term for the archaic Greek poets.³⁰ Through vision or *Schau*, this master grasps ideal beauties invisible to the rest of men. He sees them whole and all at once, namely as *forms* or *Gestalten*; in communicating them in words, he imposes divine rule upon us. Thus, *Gestalt* is the essence of both the George Circle and their Plato: Plato sees *Gestalten*, and as a "poet" himself, makes (*gestaltet*) them manifest in the world in words, namely through the myths we call the "dialogues".³¹ These myths are not to be appreciated as *l'art pour l'art*, much less as "philosophy". Rather, they are at bottom the poet-king's *political* imposition of his synoptic vision upon the chaotic strife of his age. Plato manifests his will to power by founding the Academy as a state within the state, a nursery of "guardians".³² Thus, for the Georgians, Plato is a hero bending and binding the micro-, meso-,³³ and macrocosms into a closed, beautiful structure or *Kosmos*.³⁴ George understands his own relationship to his Circle and to Germany in a similar way, namely as instituting a new spiritual *Reich*, and so fostering a future ruling cadre to save the nation from disintegration.³⁵

The Georgian Plato is the conservative reading proximate to, and imperceptibly merging into, the lines of fascist Plato-interpretation.³⁶ As such, it reveals a paradox common to these lines, and symptomatic of their ultimate vacuity. For the Georgians, the poet's power is his ability to see the divine ideal; the

30 Detienne (1967).

31 But see Cassirer (1955), 77–78.

32 Cf. Hildebrandt (1968) on Plato as a "Staatsgründer", "Staatsmann", etc., thus repeating his view of 1911, when he wrote: "In der Akademie schuf [Platon] sich den lebendigen geistigen staat" (Hildebrandt 1911, 94; quoted at Lane 2011, 142). cf. Holstein (1934), 15; Orozco (1994), on Vering, Heyse, Holtorf.

33 Hildebrandt (1968), 132; cf. Hildebrandt (1933), 233.

34 "The purpose and privilege of philosophy is the contemplation of the world-whole" (Hildebrandt 1933, 5). Singer writes that the *Republic* is the "image" (*Gleichnis*) of the divine world and its organic constitution, in which no being (*Wesen*) is superfluous or replaceable (Singer 1927, 65; cf. 258).

35 Hildebrandt (1968), 116. cf. Hildebrandt (1933a), 152, 293, and Gadamer (1942), 251. Popper (1994, 136–137) adopts this view, as well: "Plato gives the term philosopher a new meaning, that of a lover and a seer of the divine world of Forms and Ideas. As such, the philosopher is the man who may become the founder of a virtuous city".

36 The doctor and scholar, Kurt Hildebrandt (1881–1966), a longstanding member of the Circle, joined the National Socialist Party and committed himself to its most extreme tenets.

ideal's essential feature, in turn, is its wholeness. His mythic expression of that ideal manifests as far as possible just this totality—but nothing else. That is, myth as a linguistic form mirrors the divine in *its* form as a whole, but cannot articulate its content, since any articulation would necessarily distract and diffract³⁷ the gaze into the particular. Myth operates as a symbol of the divine, not in narrated events, but in the closed line of its *Gestalt*.³⁸ The danger of such involute vision is obvious: form becomes content,³⁹ medium, and message in one. Totality, completeness, and formal coherence become ends in themselves, and displace all substantive notions of the human good.⁴⁰ Competing norms are crowded out and any means of achieving “totality” become not just permissible but imperative. Politically, the formal coherence of the state becomes an end in itself.

Platonic Parallels

Because the Nazis were self-conscious revolutionaries⁴¹ striving to break with the past,⁴² their continual recourse to Plato and antiquity seems to make little sense. Yet, unlike leftists who look towards the future institution of an ideal society, the Nazis looked back to an idealized Nordic⁴³ past which they hoped to revive.⁴⁴ Hitler writes: “the purpose of revolutions is not to tear down the whole edifice, but to remove what is badly joined or ill-fitting, and then continue building and adding at the newly-exposed healthy spot”.⁴⁵ Neither futurists nor utopians, Nazi intellectuals were also neither antiquarians nor

37 Cf. Bannes (1934), 10.

38 See Kim (2010), 213; cf. esp. Popper (1994), 55, 57, 75; Nelson (1921).

39 According to Baeumler, for Plato “there is no separation between content and form: form is content, content form” (Baeumler 1934a, 12).

40 Cf. *MK* I: 249, esp. n. 55; 92.

41 Cf. Hitler, campaign speech in Kiel, 20 July 1932, at Bauer (2008/9), 4; against gradual reform: 5. *MK*: 435.

42 Hitler, campaign speech in Dresden, 23 July 1932, at Bauer (2008/9), 10; speech in Nürnberg, 30 July 1932, at Bauer (2008/9), 11.

43 Cf. Sherratt (2013), 68–69.

44 “Now the hour has come to you; consider, what must *again* come to be: Germany! [*Denke daran, was wieder werden muß: Deutschland!*]” (Hitler, speech in Nürnberg, 30 July 1932, at Bauer 2008/9, 14; emphasis added).

45 *MK*: 286; cf. 329.

traditionalists.⁴⁶ They reject tradition⁴⁷ as lifeless acquiescence in the passing of time, and instead scan the past for a timeless way of life that had once been really instantiated.⁴⁸

Now such an “idealistic” interest in history sounds similar to that of the Georgians,⁴⁹ so it is unsurprising that the Nazis think Plato anticipates National Socialism in its purest form, or that they see in Plato himself a model of the National Socialist *Führer*. Neither the Georgians nor the Nazis consider him to be merely one great man among many, to be consulted on political and economic arrangements. Nor is it simply that the arrangements he outlines in the *Republic* conveniently harmonize with National Socialist goals. The connection is deeper: conservatives and National Socialists both see in Plato a kindred *form fetishist* resisting the unruly flow of events. For them, history is not something to be endured, but to be made, not a sequence of events but a creative task.

Just as George models himself and his mission on Plato, the Nazi writer, Joachim Bannes, compares Plato to Hitler, again emphasizing the mythic *Ge-stalt*-theme. In his 1933 book, *Hitlers Kampf und Platons Staat*, Bannes claims that Hitler sees the National Socialist state as a whole, proclaims and realizes it. Thus Bannes gives Hitler the role of the hierophantic Poet heralded by the Georgians, but for Bannes, the purported parallels are not a matter of historical accident, but determined by Plato’s and Hitler’s racial affinity as Aryans. Now, despite his talk of “blood” and “body [*Leib*]”, George conceives Europe’s corruption in mystical and cultural terms. By contrast, the National Socialists interpret the German *Volk*-character in terms of race. This manifests itself in two ways in their reading of Plato. First, a writer such as Hans Günther tries to establish a genetic kinship between Plato and German National Socialist thinkers. Plato was a member of the Attic nobility, where the “Nordic blood of early Greece

46 “We gain a fundamentally new relationship to Plato, ... beyond both classicism and traditional humanism. We grasp all at once what it means for the point of departure of Platonic philosophizing to consist in the question of the basic values of Greek life, for the entire Platonic philosophy to arise out of these fundamental values, culminating in the idea of the State, as an attempt at the total reorganization [*Neuordnung*] of national-Hellenic existence” (Heyse 1933, 11–12, quoted at Orozco 1995, 52, n. 35).

47 *MK* 11: 306.

48 Hitler himself locates such a model in antiquity, echoed in the German Middle Ages (*MK*: 290–291).

49 Cf. esp. Singer (1927), 75.

must have been preserved best"; hence, Günther infers, "in his spiritual essence ... Plato appears as essentially a Nordic man".⁵⁰ Similarly, Hitler himself argues that

the Hellenic cultural ideal must be preserved for us in its paradigmatic beauty. One must not let the larger community of race be torn apart by the specific differences among peoples (*Völker*). The battle that rages today concerns very great goals: a culture fights for its existence that unites millennia within itself, and embraces Greek- and Germanism [*Griechen- und Germanentum*] together.⁵¹

This view was apparently held, not only among second-rank scholars like Hildebrandt, for whom Greeks are "just as purely Aryan" as Germans,⁵² but by Werner Jaeger, Wilamowitz's most successful student. Already in the late 1920s, Jaeger claimed that Greek culture had a special "originary encounter [*Urbegegnung*]" with "the German race".⁵³ Predictably, no mechanism for such an encounter is ever given; rather, Helmut Berve's statement is typical: "The awakened racial *instinct* of our *Volk* lets us perceive the two *Völker* of antiquity [Greece and Rome] as being—each in its own way—of our own blood and of our type [*Art*]."⁵⁴ By such vague assertions, Nazi intellectuals convinced themselves that Aryan kinship with Plato guaranteed the underlying identity of their *völkisch*-political visions, that the *Republic* and the National Socialist *Staat* were not just similar, but expressions of a common racial view of things: that *Volk* and *Staat* are essentially connected wholes, each a characteristic *Gestalt*.

Bannes calls this vision "the *Organismusgedanke* [organism-idea]" captured by the term "socialism" in "National Socialism",⁵⁵ according to which the purpose of the state is the preservation of the race, the *Volk*, and its culture. In a word, just as the organism's body is constructed so as to preserve its life—that is, itself—so too State and *Volk* may be distinguished conceptually, if not in reality: the State is the *Volk*'s body, serving its self-preservation.⁵⁶ Thus the

50 Günther (1928), 9, 24.

51 MK: 470 [= MK II: 58]; cf. MK: 276. Hildebrandt quotes these lines in his introduction to the *Republic*; cf. Orozco (1995), 34, n. 6, 78–79.

52 Hildebrandt (1939), 246–247.

53 Jaeger (1927), 9, at Orozco (1994), 147–148; cf. Jaeger (1928), 135; Jaeger (1919), 20; Bambach (2003), 243.

54 Berve (1942), 7, emphasis added; cf. Singer (1931), 27.

55 Bannes (1934), 16. Popper correctly identifies this point (Popper 1994, 54, 75, 165).

56 MK: 434–435, 476.

Nazis restate the Georgians' ideal of nested *kosmoi*. Bannes writes: "Just as the cosmos, the world, is a whole consisting of many wholes, so too the state consists of many living members",⁵⁷ a whole bound together by the "systolic" force of Eros.⁵⁸ Herbert Holtorf sees justice as the "cosmic principle of the state"⁵⁹ and rule by the elite as "cosmic lawfulness".⁶⁰ Günther, too, sees in the *Kosmos-gedanke* an expression of a broader Indo-European idea of the "world-order".⁶¹ Crucially, for Günther it is the cosmos that ultimately warrants the State's total subjection of the individual: "In that man attends to bodily-psychic genetic dispositions [*leiblich-seelische Erbanlagen*], attends to race [breed] and inherited fitness [*Tüchtigkeit*], he honors the divine world order [*kosmos*]."⁶²

By identifying Plato not only as an Aryan kinsman, but as one whose importance lies precisely in his paradigmatic vision and expression of *the* Aryan political idea—"National Socialism"—the Nazi theoreticians detach Plato from the traditional humanistic conception of the Greeks as "the highest historical incarnation of pure humanity".⁶³ Instead, he is appropriated as a prophet of an exclusively Nordic ideal of organic *Gestalt*.⁶⁴ Because it is only the Aryans who are racially and spiritually capable of seeing the ideal, it can be an ideal for them alone. Again, we see the obsession with form, whether in the shape of individual, living humans; of their customs and rituals; or of the polity itself.⁶⁵ For this reason, both biological racists and metaphysical hierophants frame the danger to Germany in terms of degeneration of a formal whole, be it *Leib*, ethos, *ethnos*, language, or polity. As the Nazi pedagogue Holtorf writes:

The great Plato arises in [an] age of the deepest shock to all moral values, and fights the heroic fight against the degeneration [*Entartung*] of his *Volk*, against the unhealthy spirit of decay and demoralization. The great sage calls us forth to a Nordic spiritual attitude [*Seelenhaltung*].

57 Bannes (1934), 10.

58 Hildebrandt (1933), 201–202.

59 Holtorf (1934), 15.

60 Holtorf (1934), 13. Günther Holstein (1934, 17–18) writes that in Plato's *Laws*, "the organic view of the state expand[s] into an organic vision [*Schau*] of the world-whole". cf. Popper (1994), 87.

61 Günther (1928), 63, 64.

62 Günther (1928), 65, 75–76.

63 Rust (1935), 10. Again, Popper agrees that Plato was an anti-humanist, or "anti-humanitarian" (Popper 1994, 85, 67).

64 Cf. Singer (1927), 158.

65 Cf. esp. Popper (1994), xlv, 18–20, 36, 38.

He continues: "We Germans" hear this as an exhortation, since Adolf Hitler's *Kampf* "aims at the same high goal".⁶⁶

In the aftermath of the First World War, both Wilamowitz and the Georgians compared Germany to Athens by highlighting their common cultural disintegration. Now, with Hitler's ascendancy, Hildebrandt (the George-disciple and Nazi Party member) celebrates the reinstitution (*Neugründung*) of the "spiritual state [*geistiger Staat*]".⁶⁷ For the Nazis, as for the Georgians,⁶⁸ the *Republic* is the key text, not just as a blueprint for a possible future *polis*, but because the text itself irrupts into the dreary course of politics as usual.⁶⁹ It intervenes in the process of Greek disintegration as a timeless, holistic vision of the State; hence, the *Republic* may be seen as metaphysical or "idealistic". Bannes, for his part, sees the *Republic* as the standard against which to measure the very idea of National Socialism.⁷⁰ He wants to compare "the structures, the inner *Bauformen* [in Hitler and Plato], [a comparison] that can be performed without reference or damage to the particular material content [of either text]".⁷¹ In 1933, Hildebrandt writes: "What we today call the total State has no more perfect representation than Plato's *Republic*".⁷² By the same token, Jaeger writes that the German will to the State should find in Plato's idea thereof its "most secure hold".⁷³ The philosopher Hans Heyse writes that the rise of the Nazis "illuminates" the *Republic*, the "original form of the idea of the *Reich*".⁷⁴ Again, Bannes writes: "The will to form, the will to resolve chaos, to restore order to a world unhinged, and to rule as guardians (in the highest Platonic sense) of order: this is the immense task National Socialism has set itself".⁷⁵

Thus, the *Republic* is the mythic image of the common Aryan vision of the *Staat*, projecting the same ideal of total form;⁷⁶ it warns of the same dan-

66 Holtorf (1934), 2; quoted at Orozco (1994), 154; cf. Singer (1927), 162.

67 Cf. Lane (2011), 148–149.

68 See Singer (1927), 75; (1931), 30, 31.

69 Cf. Popper (1994), 44.

70 Bannes (1934), 7.

71 Bannes (1934), 7. If anything, the *Republic*'s vision of the state should have appeared purer than Hitler's, given Plato's greater proximity to pure Aryan stock; cf. Hitler's lamentations concerning the irreversible racial heterogeneity of the German *Volk* at *MK*: 437. See also Rosenberg (1932), quoted at *MK* I: 315, n. 77.

72 Hildebrandt (1933a), 364.

73 Jaeger (1929), 188. cf. Gadamer quote at Orozco (1994), 152; Singer (1931), 30–31.

74 Heyse (1933), 12; quoted at Bambach (2003), 204, and n. 36.

75 Bannes (1934), 7.

76 Cf. esp. Cassirer (1955), chs. 6 and 18. "The state in itself merely represents a form [*Form*]" *MK* II: 59.

gers leading to disintegration, and urges the same remedies for preserving cohesion.⁷⁷ Plato is especially worried about the danger economic inequality poses to the unity of the three castes (*Rep.* 422a).⁷⁸ The sense of community is destroyed by wealth and poverty, so that there will not be one city at all, but many factions fighting each other, leading to the state's dissolution, as described in Book VIII. Hitler, like the conservative thinkers examined above, took this in fact to be Germany's problem. The "thirty parties", often organized around economic interests, were tearing the nation apart, he argued, promising to sweep these parties out of Germany when elected. Instead, the *Volk* was to be restored in the unity of its *Stände* or "castes".⁷⁹ Since "*Volk*" as a *Gestalt*-concept demands clear demarcation, certain constitutive characteristics have to be favored, and alien ones excluded. Only then will the blind, scattered Germans awaken and "recollect" their own authentic form as a *Volk*—"Deutschland, erwache!"

Here again, the *Republic* provides a useful template of myths by which such criteria of belonging to the *Volk* may be communicated. In the myth of metals the Nazis find support for their view that a *Volk's Gestalt* has a foundation in autochthony, perhaps the most concrete way in which a people can constitute itself as *one*. Socrates tells Glaucon that the rulers must persuade the populace that

the upbringing and the education we gave them ... were a kind of dream, that in fact they were then being fashioned and nurtured inside the earth, themselves and their weapons and their apparel. Then, when they were quite finished, the earth, being their mother, brought them out into the world. So even now they must take counsel for, and defend, the land in which they live as their mother and nurse, if someone attacks it, and they must think of their fellow-citizens as their earth-born brothers.⁸⁰

The Nazis of course are unable to tell this "noble lie", since the migrations of the ancient Aryans are an integral part of their myth.⁸¹ Instead, they argue that Germans as Aryans have a special spiritual relationship to the land, wherever it might be. Now by calling the myth of autochthony a "noble lie", Plato keeps

⁷⁷ *MK*: 435.

⁷⁸ Plato considers the rich and poor classes equivalent to "two hostile cities", each of which contains further cities (*Rep.* 422e–423a).

⁷⁹ Hitler rejects class as a socialist concept (*MK* I: 359). cf. Popper (1994), 45, 47, 98.

⁸⁰ *Rep.* 414de. Trans. Grube (modified).

⁸¹ Cf. *MK* I: 326; II: 21.

his distance: he does not himself believe it, but instead thinks that it is good, for the sake of the state, that the people should believe it. This ambivalence runs through the myth of metals, as well, that is, the lie that must be told in order to keep individuals satisfied with their lot in life: some have gold, others silver, and yet others bronze souls (*Rep.* 415a–d). In other words, these Platonic myths give physical (geo-biological) expression to what is in fact the optimal arrangement of the state as a whole. This most rational or “spiritual” political order, paradoxically, only seems possible if the castes believe in a (false) geo-biological myth.⁸²

This paradox is reflected in disagreements among the Nazis regarding the nature of the *Volk*’s “racial” bond. Hildebrandt, Heidegger, and even Hitler himself argue that they, like Plato, are seeking the “new foundation” of a *geistiger Staat*, a “spiritual State”.⁸³ As Bannes puts it, the Aryan *concept* is the “ideal core of the [National Socialist] movement’s worldview”, whereas the “race-breeding [*rassenpflegerischen*], eugenic perspective” has at most a “conditional, administrative function”.⁸⁴ Thus Bannes and Hildebrandt⁸⁵ reject Günther’s⁸⁶ biological interpretation of race as just the mechanistic conception of human life that an “idealist” like Hitler condemns.⁸⁷

Nonetheless, the Nazis are generally agreed that human fitness (*Tüchtigkeit*) must be preserved and amplified at the biological level.⁸⁸ While this view might find support in Plato, for example in the famous midwife passage at *Theaetetus* 149b, the *Republic* gives fodder to an even more extreme view: not only is the *Volk* to be kept free of alien blood, its own stock must be improved by a strict eugenic regimen.⁸⁹ As repellent as this view is, it suggests that the Nazis saw “Aryan” stock not as an immutable essence, but as a syndrome of traits

82 Cf. Popper (1994), 132 ff.

83 Hildebrandt, quoted at Lane (2011), 148–149. cf. esp. *MK* I: 352; *MK* 433–434.

84 Bannes (1934), 19, n. 28.

85 Hildebrandt (1933, 239) points to *Republic* 407d for a discussion of gymnastics and a healthy physical regimen. “This ‘hygiene’ of Plato’s is ... as in Sparta, ‘racial hygiene’ [*Rassenhygiene*]”.

86 Günther (1928), 43, 78.

87 Cf. *MK* I: 316, n. 77, 368, 373; esp. *MK* II: 16, 30, 58 and 75; *MK*: 327–328, 487. Günther (1928, 74–75) denies that his view is materialistic. This point is related to the doctrine of *Leib*, a *media via* between idealism and materialism. cf. esp. *MK* I: 266, and n. 125.

88 Günther consistently revises the translation of *aretē* from the usual “*Tugend*” (virtue) to “*Tüchtigkeit*” (fitness); cf. Heidegger’s emphasis on *taugen* (being fit for, suitable to) as an explanation of Plato’s form of the Good (Heidegger 1947, 38).

89 Cf. *Rep.* 424a, quoted by Günther at Günther (1928), 20. Günther strangely omits Plato’s ὡς περ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις (“just as in other living beings, as well”; *Rep.* 424b1). See also

to be manipulated, as in the breeding of horses or dogs.⁹⁰ Indeed, Günther seems to identify race with what we would call “pure breed” in horses and dogs.⁹¹ This suggests how a “concept” or idea could have a quasi-biological foundation, namely in a certain heritable breed-character, a genetic receptivity to a certain rearing and training (*Erziehung*).⁹² Thus, as some dog-breeds might be especially intelligent or disposed to “courage” (e.g., guard-dogs), while others take to tasks like pointing, retrieving, or sitting on a lap, so certain human beings—the Nazis would say, certain “breeds” (*Arten*) of human—might be markedly disposed to training in intellectual, military, or banausic activities, respectively. In short, it is not that concepts or virtues are themselves inherited, but that these find fertile ground in certain biologically (“racially”) determined types, but not in others.

For Plato, the professionalization of the guardian class is the most important concern of the ruler, and as such, it must be followed with a fanatical devotion to the state as a whole. For this reason, then, he argues for the eugenic development of the guardian caste, which, like a breed of dog, is to be bred for intelligence and courage (*Rep.* 375e–376c).⁹³ The Nazi theoreticians infer that for Plato, the essential task of the state, in pursuing its ultimate goal of the *Volk*’s survival, is the *Zucht* (breeding) and *Erziehung* (rearing, training) of the best type of human being.⁹⁴ Oddly, Günther, the most extreme biological racist among our Nazi Platonists, seems to misread Plato on this point. Misled by his positivism into a historicist interpretation of the *Republic*, Günther regards the Platonic State as *unwarlike*, since Athens had “just suffered the devastating war policy of an immoderate democracy against aristocratic Sparta”.⁹⁵ Never-

Rep. 459a. Socrates often resorts to animal and plant breeding in discussing the care of the young, e.g., *Eu.* 2d, *Ap.* 25b. cf. Günther (1928), 34, 36, 41, 47, 49, 52–53, 55, 75, 78–79; Popper (1994), 139.

90 Cf. *MK* II: 32 ff., 305.

91 “*Gute Rasse*”, lit. “good race”. “*Reinrassig*” (“pure-race”) is the usual German phrase for “pure-bred”. cf. *MK*: 324; Günther (1928), 50; Popper (1994), 49, 71, for a similarly broad reading of the term “race”.

92 Here again the peculiar combination of the physical (“blood”) and mental-spiritual (“*Geist*”) is manifest. cf. esp. *MK*: 433–434, 280, 316; Günther (1928), 56–58, 67; and Sartre (1948), 118 ff.

93 As we will see below, the political imperative of breeding a ruling caste also determines the Nazi interpretation of Platonic *paideia* or education, and thus of education generally. cf. Popper (1994), 48 ff.

94 Günther (1928), 43, 78. See 208, above, for Wilamowitz’s different use of the term “*Zucht*”.

95 Günther (1928), 46. Günther makes the basic mistake of seeing the *Republic* as a blueprint solely for *Athens*’ rehabilitation. Instead, it is *the City*—its idea—conceived as a process

theless, despite its simplemindedness, Günther's reading highlights an aspect of (Platonizing) National Socialism which seems surprising in retrospect, viz., that it is not in the first place focused on aggressive wars of expansion and conquest, but rather on an internal militarization of both state and individual. The soldier is not merely a functionary of the state, but rather the embodiment of its ideal member. As Gadamer writes, "the caste [*Stand*] of the guardians is the *authentic condition* [*Stand*] of man".⁹⁶ Here Gadamer may have been inspired by Hildebrandt,⁹⁷ who writes that, for Plato, "to be a true human being is to be a warrior".⁹⁸ Erich Rothacker identifies the "comportment of the soldier" as the "most outstanding example of a synthesis of aristocratic and ... folk-bound comportments".⁹⁹ Rothacker argues that the forces brought to bear in the external defense of the state have "racial, *völkisch*, [and] historical origins and content", but that their development merely for external defense is insufficient for the ideal German *Lebensgestaltung*: it is *Geist* and *Haltung*, that is, the *inner* spirit and comportment that must be cultivated.¹⁰⁰

beginning with the *notional* city of pigs in Book II. Günther (and indeed, Hildebrandt and Singer, following *nolens volens* Wilamowitz) here indulges in an extreme form of historicist psychologism.

96 Gadamer (1934), 198, 200. cf. Orozco (1995), 62, 170; Singer (1927), 91.

97 Whose (1933a) he reviewed (Gadamer 1935).

98 Hildebrandt (1933), 238. cf. Popper (1994), 98–99.

99 Rothacker (1934), 148.

100 Rothacker (1934), 149. Nevertheless, "external" war belongs to the very essence of both Nazi and Platonic militarism. The *kallipolis* grows out of the so-called city of pigs, the city of necessity that Socrates calls the true and healthy city (*Rep.* 372e). However, when a city grows "feverish" with unnecessary appetites, wars of expansion become necessary (*Rep.* 373de). Hence, the crucial caste of the *kallipolis* is that of the guardians bred and trained for war (*Rep.* 374e). It is in the elaboration of the sick war-state, and especially the function of the guardians, that we can come to see more clearly the growth of justice and injustice in cities generally (*Rep.* 372e). The state of war serves a similarly clarifying purpose at the beginning of the *Timaeus*. In a frightening passage to my knowledge not discussed by Nazi theoreticians, Socrates alludes to an earlier discussion, which is either the dialogue of the *Republic*, or some other similar construction of the ideal state (*Ti.* 19c; cf. Zeyl 2000, 26–27). He reiterates the eugenic system and then says: it is as if we have only painted a beautiful but motionless animal; let us now see it in action—let's see it *fight* by sending our ideal state into war! The Nazi valorization of the "soldier" suggests an interpretation of Socrates' strangely bloodthirsty demand: just as the highest form of human being is the "soldier" or "warrior", so, too, the war-state is the most authentic polity. Now, both of these *Gestalten*—soldier, state—are essentially militaristic, driven, pressed, and molded into a form that lets them function most effectively; hence the very idea of the state involves force. War releases the "inner" force of form, actualizing its hard-won

This reading casts a most sinister light on the role of the guardians in the *Republic*. Insofar as the *politeia* exhibits the psychic constitution of the good individual writ large, we see that for Plato, too, the members of the military caste are just those individuals who have internally militarized themselves. This does not mean “wolfishly” attacking others, but rather suppressing the appetites.¹⁰¹ They do this for the sake of their role in the state as a whole; thus Platonic militarism is primarily the garrisoning of the individual by the State.¹⁰² This personal mobilization involves, on the one hand, the binding of the centrifugal forces of appetite, and, on the other hand, the resulting *Haltung* or spiritual *Gestalt*, allowing the guardian to put his duty to the state above his own personal (i.e., appetitive) inclinations.¹⁰³

Here, the fetishism of form again plays a central role: appetite (*epithumia*) is conceived as boundless, and the epithumetic personality as correspondingly scattered, weak, and passive. Already in 1910, Hildebrandt argues that Plato, like Nietzsche and George, opposes “the deedless, melting [*zerfliessenden*], boundless” aspects of Romanticism, preferring the crystalline hardness of *Gestalt* and the firmness of the deed.¹⁰⁴ The guardian-soldier is the realization of form’s discipline, which allows him to act. The principle of this discipline, the focus of his action is, as stated above, the welfare of the whole, the state. Thus, the National Socialist guardian is not only the “watchman” of the *Volk*, but, first and foremost, the revolutionary vanguard of the State as it resolves itself. He alone lives out the “fanatical, even hysterical passion” that Hitler identifies as the condition of all “great upheavals on this earth”.¹⁰⁵ The signal virtue of the guardian, courage, is thus not courage in battle, but rather the “activist attitude” of the minority of men.¹⁰⁶

The selection or even breeding of the guardian caste flows naturally from the eugenicist idea. Even within a purebred “race”, there will always be a mass

potential. Or as Hildebrandt puts it: “The conduct of war is the expression of [a people’s] unity of blood” (Hildebrandt 1933, 246).

101 Cf. *Rep.* 565d–566a. cf. Freud’s analysis of the super-ego as self-directed aggression, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 78 ff. Freud writes: “Civilization ... obtains mastery over the individual’s dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by *setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city*” (79, emphasis added). cf. Adeimantus’ objection at *Rep.* 419a–420a.

102 Hitler tellingly calls the army the “ultimate and highest school” (*MK* 11: 48).

103 Cf. Gadamer (1934), 21; Orozco (1995), 89.

104 Cf. Hildebrandt (1933), 9, 395; Lane (2011), 142–143.

105 *MK*: 474 [= *MK* 1: 358; cf. 357]; Bannes (1934), 17; cf. 6.

106 *MK*: 652; Bannes (1934), 18. cf. *Rep.* 429a ff.

of followers and a small elite of active members, what Hitler calls “*Anhänger* [followers]” and “*Mitglieder* [members]”.¹⁰⁷ This intra-communal tension need not be given a biological interpretation, of course, as Heidegger’s distinction between rare, authentic *Dasein* and “the They [*das Man*]” shows.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, on Heidegger’s account, authenticity and inauthenticity are modes always operative in each and every individual: even authentic *Dasein* constantly inclines, *qua Dasein*, towards *Verfall* and decay. But in focusing on the eugenicist passages of the *Republic*, the Nazi Plato-readers understand the guardians as *bred and reared* into the “authentic condition of man”, those fanatical “members” who force the “followers” to their proper functions in the state-organism.

The organic totality of the state is clear only to the *Führer*, the hierophantic king.¹⁰⁹ Thus Günther writes that the “formation of such *Führer* became for Plato the highest goal of child-rearing [*Erziehung*]”.¹¹⁰ Günther contrasts this with the sophistic doctrine that virtue is teachable; for Plato, Günther claims, virtue is rather “a question of type [*Art*] as well as of education”.¹¹¹ He here consciously uses the term “*Tüchtigkeit*” for “virtue”, rather than the usual “*Tugend*”. The latter has moral-theoretical connotations, whereas the former suggests physical fitness and competence. Thus, on Günther’s account, the “virtue” or excellence that Plato talks about in the *Republic* is not an “idea”, but a disposition bred in the bone. The guardians are not “virtuous” because of what has been taught them, but because of their eugenically generated nature.¹¹² As Günther puts it, the guardians are the

“selection-stratum” [*Ausleseschicht*] of high, inherited talents, from which again and again the highest inherited talents are to emerge. It is Plato’s priority to tend this caste, to give it challenging tasks, to gain from it strong and able [*tüchtigen*] offspring. All of his proposals regarding the genetic strengthening [*erblichen Ertüchtigung*] of the people as a whole begin from and constantly return to the caste of the guardians [*Wächter*].¹¹³

107 MK: 652 (= MK II: 231).

108 Cf. also Jaspers (1931), quoted at Orozco (1995), 88, n. 82; Singer (1931), 20.

109 Cf. Popper (1994), Ch. 8, “The Philosopher King”, esp. 137.

110 Günther (1928), 20.

111 Günther (1928), 20, 68.

112 Cf. *Meno* 70a.

113 Günther (1928), 26.

Or as Singer put it the previous year, “the legislators’ care must be fully directed at [seeing to it] that the nature of the guardians [*Wächter*] attains the most beautiful and purest growth [*Wuchs*]”.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, Günther’s biologism appears to be a minority view. Eugenics is just one tool in the fascist instrumentarium for combatting dissolution at the level of *Blut*.¹¹⁵ But it is only the starting point in the overarching project of the total formation of the optimal human being.¹¹⁶ This project is elaborated and completed by a spiritual, ideal *Erziehung* into the psychosomatic whole of the perfect ruler. This king or *Führer*, for Plato, is not a thinker, but a dictator: “For Plato, to give laws means setting down what ought to happen, *but not to examine* what is, in essence, good or beautiful”.¹¹⁷ Once this rare heroic figure¹¹⁸ has “seen into the idea, then the aristocracy [i.e., the guardians] emulate him and make the hero the intermediary between God and *Volk*; the *Volk* becomes beautiful by integrating nicely into the whole”.¹¹⁹ In other words, the Nazis’ vision of a rigidly stratified society finds support in Plato’s view that the wise should rule,¹²⁰ where “wisdom” means the direct intuition of the Good by “the best”, who then authoritatively transmit it to those below.¹²¹ In the same vein, Hitler opposes democracy and parliamentarianism with his notion of “*Persönlichkeit* [personality]”,¹²² the “aristocratic principle of nature”.¹²³ Only this individual man (*der einzelne Mensch*) “invents, organizes, or thinks” for the *Volk*.¹²⁴ If there is something paradoxical in the Nazis’ simultaneous attack on individualism and Hitler’s celebration of “the one”, this is because, in the former sense, the individual is understood as a fragment broken off from the primordial whole,

114 Singer (1927), 105; Günther (1928), 57–58.

115 Cf. e.g. *MK* I: 226, 359; II: 64–65.

116 Cf. Bannes (1934), 10; esp. *MK*: 434.

117 Hildebrandt (1911), 95; quoted at Lane (2011), 142.

118 Cf. Jaeger (1921), 43, quoted at Orozco (1995), 43; Hitler, speech at Nürnberg, 30 July 1932, at Bauer (2008/9), 13.

119 Hildebrandt (1933a), 256. cf. *MK* II: 165.

120 Spann (1934), 20. cf. Günther (1928), 51–52.

121 Spann (1934), 20; influenced by the George Circle member, translator of Plato, and childhood friend of Hildebrandt, Wilhelm Andreae, who noticed the eugenic core of Plato’s thought (Günther 1928, 77 f.). cf. Gadamer (1942), 256: “Only he who in this way sees through [*durchblickt*] to the eternal [Idea] is capable of great politics, i.e., the lasting *Gestaltung* of political [*staatlichen*] reality”. On the *Volk*’s blindness, see *MK* I: 264; on effective mass communication, *MK* I: 363.

122 *MK* I: 365.

123 *MK* II: 81; cf. *MK* I: 79, 81–82, 109.

124 *MK*: 496.

the *Volk*; but “the one” is the visionary hero, charismatic poet, philosopher, or statesman who sees the *Volk*’s ideal *Gestalt*.¹²⁵

Thus, Plato’s hierarchical thinking anticipates the National Socialist idea of the articulated whole, opposed to modernity’s masses of fragmented individuals,¹²⁶ in which the charismatic personality rules the “entire *Reich*” down to the “smallest cell of the community”.¹²⁷ Hitler writes: “Authority of each leader towards those below and responsibility to those above [is the] basic constructive principle of our state’s entire constitution [*Staatsverfassung*]”.¹²⁸ The king’s task is the *Gestaltung des Menschen* (the formation of the human being).¹²⁹ Whether such kings are “active doers or visionaries, artists [*Bildner*] or law-givers, singers or priests, ...”, they are “the true commanders and *Führer*, the paradigmatic *Gestalten* and highest judges, the embodiments of the highest measure and human beings of the ultimate consecration”.¹³⁰

Consequently, the basic problem of constituting such a “spiritual state”¹³¹ is selecting, in advance, the aristocracy from which the *Führer* will arise, and which will enforce his vision upon the *Volk*.¹³² Thus Hildebrandt titles his discussion of the *Republic*, “*Bildung des neuen Adels*”, the formation or education of the new nobles.¹³³ In short, the immediate need to train or “form” the *Führer* of the *Volk* puts Plato’s educational theory at the center of his Nazi readers’ attention, much more than long-term genetic optimization. In Plato’s Academy they see, like George, not a theoretical institute,¹³⁴ but the training ground of a political cadre (*Führerauslese*) in the education of a small circle (*eines kleinen Kreises*), ready to take power “at some fateful hour”.¹³⁵ The *Republic* serves as a blueprint both of an educational system in an ideal Aryan state,¹³⁶ regenerating

125 Cf. *MK*: 652; *MK* II: 154, and n. 7; Bannes (1934), 18. On the need for guardians constantly to prove their individual worth, see Günther (1928), 26–27. cf. Popper (1994), 87–101, esp. 97.

126 Cf. esp. Bannes (1934), 17. Singer has a more nuanced view: Singer (1927), 156, cf. esp. 249.

127 *MK*: 501; cf. Bannes (1934), 14. Bannes uses the old Georgian concepts of *Herrschaft und Dienst* (lordship and service) to characterize Hitler’s doctrine.

128 *MK*: 501; cf. Bannes (1934), 17. cf. Popper (1994), 99, 114 ff.

129 Singer (1927), 155.

130 Singer (1927), 155.

131 A “*geistiger Staat*”, in which men are educated to become “genuine statesmen” (Hildebrandt 1933a, 28).

132 Cf. *MK*: 651 ff.; Bannes (1934), 17.

133 Hildebrandt (1933a), 225.

134 Hildebrandt (1933a), 153; cf. Günther (1928), 13; Gadamer (1934), 197.

135 Bannes (1934), 9. cf. Singer (1927), 158; esp. Günther (1928), 18–19, 61; and Spann (1934), 18.

136 Cf. esp. the classical journal, *Das humanistische Gymnasium* ([*DHG*]; later named *Gymnasium*), in which the *Deutscher Philologenverband* (“Association [Union] of German Gram-

Führer capable of political synopsis, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, as a guide to the training necessary for establishing such an ideal state in the first place.¹³⁷ Thus Nazi intellectuals face two simultaneous educational tasks: first, to redefine education (*Bildung*) as the formation (*Gestaltung*) of the “new man”;¹³⁸ second, to root out extant rivals.¹³⁹ Plato provides a model for both tasks, not only by describing the guardians’ *paideia*, but also in his attacks on sophistic, rhetoric, and poetry.

As mentioned above, educated Germans and the German educational system in the nineteenth century adhered to a humanistic ideal of cultivating individual talents for their own sake. The Nazis seek to undermine this individualistic orientation while, at the same time, coopting the prestige of humanism for their own ends. Although not a Nazi himself, Werner Jaeger¹⁴⁰ was at the forefront of this movement, the so-called Third Humanism, which he conceived as a “political” humanism.¹⁴¹ Jaeger’s understanding of education is both narrower and wider than that of the “second humanists”: the individual’s education should not strive to develop his “humanity” for his private edification; rather, he should be trained only in such skills as will serve the public interest of the state.¹⁴² Thus, *Bildung* serves Hitler’s goal of “hammering” patriotism (*Nationalgefühl*) into the youth,¹⁴³ primarily developing character, will, and decisiveness, producing someone “joyous in [assuming] responsibility”.¹⁴⁴

Jaeger shares the view, discussed above, that Germans and Greeks have an innate affinity, and makes it the basis of his Third Humanism. As Orozco writes, “The more ‘German’ the cultural development may be in Jaeger’s sense,

mar School Teachers” [DPHV]) states, “the goal of all German education [*Erziehung*] is the German human being as a member of the *Volksgemeinschaft*” (community of the *Volk*). See also Roche in this volume.

137 Cf. Gadamer (1934), 189.

138 Hildebrandt (1933), 28, 84; Popper (1994), 23.

139 Cf. Günther (1928), 46.

140 Cf. esp. Orozco (1994), 143; (1995), 33 ff. As with Gadamer, the precise nature of Jaeger’s relationship to the Nazis and to (proto-)fascist thought is controversial. Jaeger emigrated to the U.S. in 1936, settling at Harvard in 1939. cf. <http://www.giffordlectures.org/lecturers/werner-jaeger> (11 November 2016); and esp. Orozco (1995), 81–85.

141 The *dritte Humanismus* was “third”, after the “first” Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman antiquity, and the “second” early nineteenth-century humanism of Schiller, Goethe, and Humboldt; cf. esp. Güthenke, 2006. The term was apparently coined by Jaeger’s friend, the philosopher Eduard Spranger.

142 Cf. *DHG* (1933), 210, quoted at Orozco (1995), 32.

143 *MK*, 474 f., quoted at Bannes (1934), 16–17.

144 *MK*: 452; at Bannes (1933), 19 (= *MK* 11: 42, 53).

the more 'Greek' it will be".¹⁴⁵ By the same token, "authentic Greek education (*paideia*, *Bildung*) is German".¹⁴⁶ Thus, whatever Jaeger's personal feelings towards the Nazis may have been, there is no question that his political humanism fits well with the Nazis' appropriation of Platonic *paideia* as a model for developing their watchmen. Similarly, Gadamer, in his 1934 speech, "Plato and the Poets",¹⁴⁷ does not explicitly mention "the fascist present"; nevertheless, in speaking of Plato's *kallipolis* and not (explicitly) Germany, he declares that the "new State is to be a State of *Erziehung*".¹⁴⁸ And later that year, in his article, "History of the Philosophy of the State", Günther Holstein declares more radically that the *Republic* focuses on "the problem of *Erziehung* to a life in the state, which at the same time is a life *for* the state".¹⁴⁹

This interpretation operates on a double set of parallels: on the one hand, between the "sophistic enlightenment"¹⁵⁰ of the 5th Century BCE,¹⁵¹ and the Enlightenment values promoted by the Second Humanism of Germany's Classical and Romantic periods;¹⁵² on the other hand, between Plato's reaction to the sophists, and the Nazis' own political interpretation of the human being and hence humanism—an interpretation with roots, as I argued, in both Wilamowitz's and George's approach to Plato.¹⁵³ The Second Humanism emphasized the ideas of individual fulfillment and the development of one's talents for their own sake: "the pure development [*Herausgestaltung*] of the human in

145 Orozco (1994), 148.

146 Cf. Jaeger (1925), 115, quoted at Orozco (1995), 34, n. 6, 79.

147 Delivered to the *Gesellschaft der Freunde des Humanistischen Gymnasiums* ("Association of the Friends of the Humanistic Gymnasium") in Marburg—the home of Natorp and Cohen.

148 Orozco (1995), 32, 47. On the other hand, in the introduction to his review of recent Plato scholarship, Gadamer explicitly recognizes that the orientation towards the state and community "via *Erziehung*" is the "core of our new understanding of Plato, which *our own contemporary destiny* [*Zeitgeschick*] has enabled us to see" (Gadamer 1933, 63; *GW* 5: 212; emphasis added).

149 Holstein (1934), 11. Holstein himself died in 1931 (Huber 1937, 549). Karl Larenz, his collaborator, was an important Nazi pedagogue, as was the editor of the series, Alfred Baeumler.

150 Cf. Gadamer (1934), 200.

151 Cf. Guthrie (1971), 48, quoting Jaeger, *Paideia* 1, 288. For his part, Wilamowitz rejects any equation of sophistic and the Enlightenment (Orozco 1995, 51).

152 Gadamer (1934), 187.

153 Cf. Gadamer (1935), 332. For more on Nazi attitudes to humanism, see also Roche's chapter below.

all spheres of life", the "harmonic unfolding of humanity".¹⁵⁴ Yet, as Salomon argues, in striving to develop the individual personality, traditional humanism "unwittingly detached man from the sphere to which he was ordained by blood and earth [*Blut und Boden*]"¹⁵⁵ This deracination of traditional humanism readily calls to mind the "homeless"¹⁵⁶ sophists;¹⁵⁷ from here it is but a short step to identifying the ancient sophists not only with the trope of the "deracinated Jew",¹⁵⁸ but also with *ancient* Semitic cultures. Günther in his crude way declares that Plato rejected the "Near Eastern" spirit of the sophists in favor of the "Nordic soul";¹⁵⁹ Rust ultimately uses Plato in this way to justify the expulsion of the Jews from the university.¹⁶⁰

But the sophists and their modern epigones do not merely wander the land; their very minds wander,¹⁶¹ scattered in the *polymathie* for which Heraclitus had already blamed Hesiod and Pythagoras (Fr. B40, B129). The sophists were "babblers and know-it-alls,"¹⁶² whose "encyclopedic"¹⁶³ scope of inquiry, including natural phenomena, allows them to stand in for the positivist mania for facts (never mind that heirs of German Classicism like Natorp resolutely combatted positivism in all its forms). Even Socrates does not escape Hildebrandt's criticism of being, like the sophists, committed to "general *Bildung*" as his profession.¹⁶⁴ Thus "corrosive sophistic", both ancient and modern, contributes to cultural and political decay.¹⁶⁵ Finally, the alleged (and oddly combined) characteristics of sophistic—universalism and relativism—are given a political interpretation. A non-Nazi but culturally conservative philosopher like Karl Jaspers sees sophistic as a "catchall for parliamentary democracy and the welfare state";¹⁶⁶ Günther calls them demagogues (*Volksverführer*).¹⁶⁷ The Nazis predictably go much further. Holtorf argues that racial degeneration results

154 Jaeger (1928), 17, quoted at Gadamer (1934), 197; cf. e.g., Günther (1928), 16, 20–21.

155 Salomon (1933), 10.

156 Cf. esp. Heidegger (1947), 87.

157 Hildebrandt (1933), 372 and Gadamer (1934), 188; cf. *Ti.* 19b–20b.

158 Sartre (1948), 118.

159 Günther (1928), 29, 38, 49.

160 Rust (1940), 119; quoted at Orozco (1994), 156; also in Orozco (1995).

161 Cf. *MK* I: 380, on "*deutschvölkischen Wanderscholaren*".

162 Günther (1928), 15. cf. *MK*: 477–479, 278.

163 Gadamer (1934), 197.

164 Hildebrandt (1968), 110; (1933), 21–22, 18–19, 30 ff.

165 Hildebrandt (1933), 227; Gadamer (1942), 253: "decay of the Greek ethos of the State [*Staatsethos*]" is the expression of "sophistic doctrines".

166 Orozco (1995), 50, 51. cf. Brunkhorst (1987) for the rhetorical deployment of "sophistic".

167 *Verführer* ("seducers") as opposed to *Führer* ("leaders"): Günther (1928), 15.

from the “sophistic” doctrine that “everything that has human features is equal”, which “destroys the last bit of racial sense of self that was still present here and there”;¹⁶⁸ thus, in both Greece and Germany it brings about the “collapse of Aryandom [*Ariertum*]”.¹⁶⁹

The Nazi intellectuals, then, adopt and adapt this political, Platonic Third Humanism to their own ends. Plato’s fight against the cultural and political corruption of sophistic is likened to Nazi philosophy’s goal of forging new “pedagogical models”, so that “... humanity may again return to itself from its inner fragmentation” and “seal and witness this [reintegration] through progress in the happy mastery of our planet”.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Günther argues, the sophistic doctrine of equality, epitomized in modern times by Rousseau and the French Revolution, was opposed by Plato, who is committed to a doctrine of human inequality.¹⁷¹ In thus identifying the sophists with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, Günther anticipates Gadamer’s characterization of Platonic *paideia* as “a counter-movement aimed against the corrosive character of the political being [*staatlichen Wesens*] as taken up by the powers of the Enlightenment”.¹⁷²

Here again we see the trope of *Gestalt* at work. Already in 1927, the Georgian, Singer, wrote that the *Republic* is concerned with the question of “what man is, and the norm innate to man”;¹⁷³ but it is the perfect state that manifests this norm, “and with it, the perfect human being”.¹⁷⁴ Gadamer takes up this Georgian motif, arguing that Plato’s rejection of sophist polymathy and a haphazard morality based on random snippets of Homer and Hesiod is embodied in his “true education-State”—not just the text, *Republic*, but in the “community of Plato’s Academy”. This is not an apolitical (*staatsfremd*) research institute, but has as its mission discovering “what is right in one’s own soul”, or, as Gadamer puts it, the “education [*Erziehung*] of the state-oriented human being [*des staatlichen Menschen*]”.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, for the Third Humanists, Plato’s oscillation between soul and state in the *Republic* is not merely a heuristic device for articulating the nature of justice in the individual: rather, the “political man” is

168 Holtorf (1934), 1; quoted at Orozco (1995), 50; Günther, too, associates the sophists with a doctrine of universal equality, e.g., at Günther (1928), 20, *passim*.

169 Orozco (1994), 160–161. cf. Sartre’s incisive observations at Sartre (1948), 121.

170 Bannes (1934), 20.

171 Günther (1928), 21, 47, 67.

172 Gadamer (1934), 201.

173 Singer (1927), 68, 91.

174 Singer (1927), 117.

175 Gadamer (1934), 197. cf. *MK* 11: 43 (“*Erziehungsgrundsätze des völkischen Staats*”).

the soul *reorganized* on the pattern of the State, integrated and constituted as a human being always with respect to the state.¹⁷⁶ Thus all normative sources such as morality or religion are supplanted by the State.¹⁷⁷ Finally, we see the Nazi, Bannes, emphasize the integrity and wholeness of Socratic/Platonic philosophy “as opposed to sophistic’s *polypragmosynē*¹⁷⁸ and *polylogia*,¹⁷⁹ that is, helplessness [*Mittellosigkeit*], a lack of ideas, a diffracted captivation by facts in action and thought”.¹⁸⁰ Hitler himself simply says: “the *völkisch* State will reduce general scientific instruction to an abridged *form* [*Form*] that encompasses the essential”.¹⁸¹

Humanism’s main arena is language.¹⁸² Since critics of traditional humanism conveniently designate as “sophistic” any cultural phenomenon they deem degenerate (*entartet*), poetry, too, falls under this label, and prey to the same critique, especially insofar as it makes any educational claims.¹⁸³ Again, the general parallel holds: ancient poetry as a species of sophistic is compared to modern analogues. Censorship or even burning of those analogues is then justified by pointing to Plato’s critique of the poets. This critique, in turn, can only be understood in the context of the foundation of the new state in the *Republic*, and the rejection of the actually subsisting polity.¹⁸⁴ Now as we saw above, for the Georgians, poetry has inauthentic and authentic forms, a distinction adopted by the Nazis. Inauthentic poetry is episodic and thus without form, whereas the authentic (Georgian) version is a mythic integer or *Gestalt*. Thus, contemporary genres of speech and writing—journalism, the novel, drama—are all suspect, not only for corrupting content, but for lack of form. It is only the State that, for the sake of maintaining its own rigid ethos, supplies the binding *Gestalt* of poetry (and rhetoric).¹⁸⁵

176 Greek antiquity provides a model—the DPhV declares in its 1933 manifesto on *Bildung*—“of a humanity that is essentially based on the recognition that the human being is the political being *tout court* and that the state is prior to the [individual] human being”. *DHG* (1933), 209–210, quoted at Orozco (1995), 32. See Gadamer (1934), 194.

177 Cf. Orozco (1995), 59.

178 Universal curiosity, but perhaps here carrying positivistic overtones of interest in any and every fact.

179 Talkativeness, Heidegger’s *Gerede* or “idle chatter”.

180 Bannes (1934), 10. cf. Hitler’s critique of bourgeois education, *MK* II: 54, 57.

181 *MK* II: 57.

182 Hitler on the “magical power of the word”, and the “force of speech”: *MK* I: 110–111.

183 Thus Gadamer identifies poets as a kind of sophist, probably thinking of *Prot.* 316d ff. (Gadamer 1934, 192). cf. Gadamer (1934), 195.

184 Gadamer (1934), 193–194.

185 Cf. Gadamer (1934), 195; Orozco (1995), 48.

Thus we misunderstand Nazi censorship and book burning if we consider it simply as a way of silencing rivals and opponents, an extreme tactic *within* the framework of democratic debate. The effects of fascist censorship of course include the silencing of the opponent, but this negative effect is not the true purpose, namely the positive articulation of the *Volk-Gestalt*, and the annihilation of the bourgeois ideal of the perfection of *Geist*.¹⁸⁶ Again, censorship has been used not only by totalitarian regimes, but also by democratic ones in times of war. For the latter, censorship is viewed as a necessary if unwelcome part of domestic mobilization; the former, however, considers censorship necessary and beneficial for keeping the *Volk* forever mobilized in its “authentic” purity, and preserving it against *Selbstentzweiung*,¹⁸⁷ *Selbstentfremdung*,¹⁸⁸ *Selbstvergessenheit*.¹⁸⁹

In sum: for the Nazis, the ideal State is an organic political totality; it is the living body of the *Volk*, expressing and sheltering the *Volk*’s spirit.¹⁹⁰ All its elements must be unified in a mystic vision, unique to the philosopher-king or *Führer*. For conservative readers like Jaeger and Gadamer, as for their Nazi adapters, Plato’s *kallipolis* is the paradigmatic *Erziehungsstaat*, the “education-state” whose highest purpose is to produce the cadre of such kings and thus preserve itself. Their training requires the *Wächter* (guardian, guard) to colonize and mobilize his own soul, forming it in the image of the very State he serves. As the State is one, so he must establish total control over himself, censoring, repressing, expelling all thoughts of humanity *an sich*, or contemplation for its own sake. Ultimately, the *Volk*, fully mobilized through the State, comes to life in war.

Conclusion

The conservative and National Socialist interpretations of Plato share two main traits: 1) an understanding of the forms as *Gestalten*—divine, perfect, beautiful wholes—grasped in a single intuition or *Schau*; 2) the belief that whoever sees these *Gestalten* has, *ipso facto*, authority to impose them on human beings, both individually (through education) and collectively (through rule). This political Plato not only theorized such *Gestalten*, education, and rule, he actually saw

186 Cf. Orozco (1995), 55–56.

187 Gadamer (1942), 258–259.

188 Heidegger (2014), 56–57.

189 Orozco (1995), 70; Gadamer (1934), 26–27. cf. esp. Popper (1994), 52, 99.

190 *MK* II: 22 ff., esp. 25.

the forms himself; through the Academy, in turn, he founded a real *Erziehungsstaat*, the training ground of the future rulers. For the Georgeaner, this makes Plato a hierophant (the seer of forms); a “poet” in the archaic sense of being a *maître de vérité* (the seer communicating that vision); and, finally, a king (the *Führer* of his new, secret *Reich*).¹⁹¹ Whereas for the George Circle all this remained an esoteric dream, the Nazi Platonizers took the *kallipolis* literally as an Aryan nobleman’s blueprint for the Aryan State.¹⁹²

It is true, then, that the *Republic* presents a picture of a psycho-political totality—a *Gestalt* of the ideal man and his ideal community—that in fact involves selective breeding, militarization, mass deportation, censorship, and dictatorship. Thus, returning to the questions with which I opened this chapter, one cannot say that the Nazi readers illegitimately impose these features on an innocent text. Like the Georgean, the National Socialist reading of Plato is governed by “form” both subjectively and objectively. That is, because the Nazi is (subjectively) a hater of argument (*Ph.* 89d–91a) and a lover of beautiful sights and sounds (*Rep.* 475d), he is naturally attracted to a rhapsody of form, *Gestalt*, and myth. And these are undeniably present (objectively) in Plato, in whom the Nazi sees mirrored—and therefore authorized—his subjective predilections. But his reading ignores form’s dialectical complement. *Because* the Nazi only “sees” form, he can only see the “formal” in Plato, and is blind, or rather, deaf, to the most crucial element of Plato’s thought: dialectic, that is to say, *philosophy*.

This insensibility to dialectic seems to infect all those who come into contact with the Georgean view, like Heidegger.¹⁹³ They overlook or suppress Plato’s dialectical essence, so clearly stated in the Divided Line. On the one hand, it is true, Plato contrasts the perfect divine unity of forms against the variable manifold of mundane particulars. On the other hand, he states that the soul’s highest epistemic state, *nous*, grasps the highest forms “*by the power of dialectic*” or *logos*.¹⁹⁴ Since discourse (*logos*), unlike intuition, never captures particular wholes, it follows that “seeing” the forms is but a metaphor for a discursive process. “Dialectic” therefore names a cathartic¹⁹⁵ technique that first purifies the soul of false opinion, in order then to climb synthetically to the intelligent discernment of “the Good”. Hence the means of communicating the highest

191 Cf. Singer (1927), 10, 20 f.

192 Cf. esp. Hildebrandt (1933), 10; Lane (2011), 134.

193 Heidegger’s notorious rectoral address is, I argue elsewhere, a pseudo-Platonic inquiry into the essence of the university as just the kind of *Erziehungsanstalt* for future *Führer* described above.

194 *Rep.* 511b. Only Stenzel seems to remember this point (Stenzel 1934, 118).

195 Cf. Gadamer (1934), 190–191.

truth on the “descent” will be the same as that of gaining it on the “ascent”, namely dialectic and dialogue. No special new prophetic power is needed, nor does Plato mention one in the *Republic*.¹⁹⁶

Plato does sometimes call the philosopher “godlike”, yet his ideal master of truth is *not* the mythopoet¹⁹⁷ who knows not what he says (*Ap.* 22bc); it is instead Socrates, the tireless interrogator and destroyer of just such mythic thought-forms.¹⁹⁸ The philosopher-king is only a king because he is first a philosopher, that is, a master of dialectic and dialogue. It is only through *logos* that the forms become clear to him.¹⁹⁹ They are not first apparent to some mystic vision, only then to be given “logical” expression.²⁰⁰ It is only thanks to their logical origin that they can be grounded and thus *justified to others* in dialogue. To say the philosopher is entitled to be king is not to grant him some special privilege (*Rep.* 347a ff.). Rather, he is compelled to rule because he has more fully than others subordinated himself to the rule of reason, the *technē dialektikē*. And this *technē* just consists in grounding every claim and command in the Good as discerned by a rationality common to all souls.

When form is fetishized, it ceases to be form. That is, when the holistic *outline* is cut off from its *inner* articulation, it has nothing to be the form *of*. Form and (conceptual) content mutually imply and constrain each other. Moreover, content is articulated dialectically, thus generating form “from within”, as it were. Without this articulation, the notion of form is unconstrained and hence reverts into its opposite, formlessness.²⁰¹ Had Plato’s Nazi interpreters been more careful readers, they might have seen this very point at the mythic origin of the *kallipolis*. The perfect, healthy political form emerges organically from the concrete needs of human beings, and the articulation and interconnection of these needs and their satisfaction: the so-called city of pigs.²⁰² Political form as an artifact—a *politeia*—by contrast, is a function of the guardians’ need to

196 Needless to say, I therefore reject Popper’s assertion that the “power of seeing ... the Good is thus indispensable to the dialectician” (Popper 1994, 137).

197 Cf. *Eu.* 6bc.

198 This is true even in such late dialogues as the *Sophist*, where the Eleatic Stranger takes Socrates’ place as a kind of “god of refutation [*theos tis elegktikos*]” (*Soph.* 216b).

199 Cf. e.g. *Eu.* 6e.

200 Gadamer alone sees the danger of *Schau* (e.g., in connection with the lovers of sights in *Rep.* v) as something potentially “very unphilosophical”, and the importance of dialogue. But even by 1942 he still does not identify dialectic and *logos* as the ultimate criterion of what is truly “seen”, i.e., *understood by the intellect* (Gadamer 1942, 261–262).

201 Cf. Baeumler (1934a), 12.

202 Popper misreads the importance of the city of pigs; cf. Popper (1994), 39–40; also 73, 75,

control the community *after* it has violated its natural articulation and thus ruptured its natural form.²⁰³ The mythic image that is the *Republic's kallipolis* therefore represents the inherent instability of a polity preoccupied with formal coherence: both internally, in its need for a police, and externally, as the guardians manifest their nature in war. The State's chronic instability can only be managed through a constant regimen of dialectic—what Socrates calls “examination”—not by a sterile vision of static form.

Thus, we can now see how Plato is to be saved from his Nazi readers, namely by restoring dialogue, dialectic, and hence reason to the center of his thought. The man who claims to rule on the basis of inspiration or “vision” and scorns dialectic as a game of blinking idiots—Plato calls that man the *tyrant*. Throughout the dialogues, Plato is keenly aware of the difficulty of distinguishing between sophist and philosopher,²⁰⁴ tyrant and king,²⁰⁵ in short, between shadow and truth. Just as the Eleatic Stranger and Theaetetus hunt down the sophist in the darkest regions of non-being, shining their way with the power of dialectic, so too the Nazi interpretation of Plato must be exposed as the tyrannical sophistry that it really is.

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77, esp. 83, where he seems to conflate the “natural” city with the caste-riven *kallipolis*, and 84, where he wrongly suggests that the city of pigs is autarkic (cf. *Rep.* 371d).

203 Cf. the contradiction in, e.g., Günther's conception of the state as an artwork, on the one hand, and the imperative of the natural and organic, on the other (Günther 1928, 52, 62; esp. 75).

204 E.g., *Apology*, *Sophist*.

205 *Republic*. cf. Popper (1994), 42 ff.

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Classics and Education in the Third Reich: *Die Alten Sprachen* and the Nazification of Latin- and Greek-Teaching in Secondary Schools

Helen Roche

Introduction

Following Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, many Classicists were terrified that Latin and Greek would be completely expunged from the school curriculum.¹ The Nazi movement's anti-intellectual proclivities, and its worship of all things *völkisch* (and hence suitably Germanic) were well known. The choice which teachers ostensibly faced was a difficult and morally challenging one: was it better to cooperate with the new regime by emphasizing the Classics' serviceability for National Socialist pedagogical ends, and thereby collaborate in the wholesale ideologization and racialization of their discipline—yet simultaneously ensuring its survival? Or should they attempt instead to resist the dictates of Nazi educational policy, and thus potentially pave the way for its elimination?²

In the past, the bulk of scholarship on the Nazification of the Classics has focused upon individuals or institutions, particularly at university level.³ In comparison, the state of affairs at secondary schools in the Third Reich has received relatively short shrift, with works often concentrating solely on the humanistic *Gymnasien* (which had always taught both Latin and Greek), and their decline.⁴ However, following the Reich Education Ministry's reforms in 1937, Latin was still a compulsory second language at the *Deutsche Oberschulen*,

1 Nickel (1970), 114–115; Fritsch (2006), 216. (N.B. I am very grateful to Professor Fritsch for providing me with a copy of his article.)

2 Cf. Kuhlmann (2006), 430–431.

3 The seminal study on this topic is still Volker Losemann's *Nationalsozialismus und Antike* (1977); for more localized examples, see Malitz (1998 and 2006). For a fairly comprehensive bibliographical survey of works published before the turn of the millennium, see Näf (2001).

4 Kuhlmann (2006), 409; cf. e.g., Nickel (1970 and 1972).

which now formed the majority of German secondary schools.⁵ This chapter therefore takes as its subject the Nazi teachers' periodical *Die Alten Sprachen* (referred to henceforward as *DAS*), which was run by the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB). Unlike longer-established periodicals such as *Das humanistische Gymnasium*, which tended to deal with more abstract and even scholarly topics, *DAS* was primarily concerned with how the Classics should be taught, encompassing all types of school, and often focusing on pedagogical methodologies which could include a wide ability range. Through analyzing the subject-matter of articles in *DAS*, we can see clearly how the Classics were Nazified in actual lessons (or at least, how they were supposed to be), and understand how teachers undertook to place their subject at the service of the new ideology.⁶

Rather than attempting to engage with those specific questions of teachers' individual or collective guilt or innocence which have often complicated discussion of the topic,⁷ this chapter simply seeks to explore some of the themes raised by *DAS*, taking them to represent what might have befallen the discipline of Classics in schools, had the Third Reich not come to such an abrupt end. It also seeks to demonstrate the surprising variety of the contributions which the journal accepted, reflecting both the diverse status of those involved (from university professors to trainee teachers) and the extent of their assimilation of National Socialist politics (some articles meet recognized scholarly standards, whilst others are unashamedly demagogic, laced through with racial buzzwords and multiple exclamation marks). One can also gain a useful idea of how the situation changed during the war years, with authors often sending in their manuscripts whilst on active service (or even, in one case, from a duty post at the POW-camp Stalag III-C)—or trying to come up with creative solutions to the catastrophic shortage of qualified teachers, as the *Wehrmacht's* death toll rose ever higher.

The journal was founded at a point when the NSLB's fortunes had begun inexorably to rise, and the future of Classics-teaching no longer seemed in

5 Apel and Bittner (1994), 233–234; Fritsch (2001a), 169–172. Fritsch (1982) provides an extensive survey of Latin-teaching materials and methods.

6 To the author's knowledge, no previous study has systematically engaged with the material in *DAS*, and more notorious Nazi Classicists' manifold contributions to the journal are often passed over in silence. For instance, Malitz (2006) never mentions the numerous articles submitted to *DAS* by the Freiburg professors Wolfgang Aly, Hans Oppermann and Hans Bogner; even Malitz's full-length biographical article on Oppermann (1998) only refers fleetingly to one of his *DAS* contributions.

7 E.g., Nickel (1970), 111–112; Nickel (1984); Malitz (1998), 519; Kuhlmann (2006), 409–410.

such grave doubt. After a trial run in 1936 under the title *Gegenwärtiges Altertum* (Contemporary Antiquity), *DAS* came fully into existence in 1937, just in time to take advantage of the secondary-school reforms mentioned above.⁸ Although the reduction of the school leaving-age by a year necessarily had an impact on language-teaching, and the hours spent on Latin and Greek were significantly cut, Classics was still firmly on the curriculum.⁹ The following year, this conclusion was confirmed by the introduction of a completely new syllabus devised by Reich Education Minister Bernhard Rust (himself a Classicist), which focused above all on imparting pupils with a suitable appreciation of the Nordic (i.e., Aryan) character of the Greek and Roman people and their cultural achievements.¹⁰ From now on, the usefulness of learning Latin and Greek was to be defined above all by racial criteria.¹¹

This was the NSLB's chance to take a firm hand in determining exactly how Rust's curricular demands should best be put into practice. Through a coordinated program of conferences, discussion groups, and publications such as *DAS* (which often contained reworked versions of papers presented at NSLB gatherings), they could actively shape interpretations of Classical texts and promote methods of teaching which toed the Party line.¹² Teachers who seemed insufficiently eager to align themselves with the new program might even be sent on *Schulungslager*, week-long camps run on paramilitary lines, featuring cross-country maneuvers and drills alongside more academically relevant lectures and seminars.¹³ While it seems that a substantial number of teachers found such interference unpalatable, many of their (often younger) colleagues saw participation in the NSLB's activity as a sure means of professional and political advancement, and made it their business to contribute whole-heartedly to the saturation of their subject with National Socialist ideology.

8 Apel and Bittner (1994), 229; cf. Fuhrmann (1984), 144–145. On the previously rather disorganized nature of the NSLB's "Sachgebiet für Alte Sprachen", see Apel and Bittner (1994), 284–291; on the NSLB's takeover of the *Gymnasialverein* and the *Deutscher Altphilologenverband*, see also Fritsch (2001a), 158–165.

9 Apel and Bittner (1994), 233–234.

10 Rust (1938), 231. On the development of the Aryan idea in earlier historiography, see Wiedemann in this volume.

11 Cf. Nickel (1972), 492.

12 Apel and Bittner (1994), 298–299.

13 Apel and Bittner (1994), 354–355, 291–297.

“Humanism—as We See It”¹⁴

One of the most pressing questions with which Classicists felt they had to engage was whether the idea of “humanism” still had any validity in the Third Reich’s brave new world.¹⁵ Whilst the movement’s *völkisch* adherents were keen to outlaw *humanitas* in any form, and saw the version of it which the “humanistic” *Gymnasien* had always propagated as hopelessly backward-looking and irrelevant, there were also supporters of the Classics who were implacably opposed to their own humanistic traditions, as well as those who wished to retain them.¹⁶ It is no coincidence that, in 1937, the periodical *Das humanistische Gymnasium* was shorn of its epithet and renamed simply “*Das Gymnasium*”.

This was a debate which would also plague *DAS* throughout its existence, eliciting contributions by leading Nazi Classics professors such as Hans Drexler, as well as the journal’s first editor, the quixotically ideological Otto Haug.¹⁷ An extreme view, put forward by Drexler, considered that any form of humanism—particularly the so-called “Third Humanism” recently promoted by Werner Jaeger—was utterly tainted; even the “neohumanism” advocated by eighteenth-century intellectuals was far too individualistic and insufficiently open to racial understanding.¹⁸ Rather, Classicists needed to forge their comprehension of antiquity anew, discovering its “original power”, however brutal.¹⁹ Although Germanic sagas might seem closer to today’s Germany, they did not hold the key to political success; it was therefore an absolute duty for Germans to study these “alternative ancestors”, appropriating their ideas of the state, which were unparalleled in history.²⁰ Haug went even further, claiming

14 The title of Faber (1938), as discussed below.

15 Apel and Bittner (1994), 226–227.

16 Kuhlmann (2006), 421–422. Matters were complicated by the fact that Hitler himself was on record (in *Mein Kampf*) as upholding the virtues of a humanistic education; cf. Apel and Bittner (1994), 221–222.

17 Haug was *Oberstudiendirektor* of the Friedrich-Schiller-Oberschule in Ludwigsburg, and edited *DAS* until his death in January 1939, at which point Friedrich Eichhorn, head of the NSLB *Sachgebiet*, took over the editorship. As well as the articles cited below, see also Bogner (1937), Egon Kirchner (1939, 140–141), Oppermann (1939) and Vorwahl (1942) for further contributions to the debate.

18 Drexler (1939), 1–2. For a full discussion of these ideas, drawing on similar literature from this period, see Roche (2013a). For more on the Third Humanism and its proponents’ attempts to resist the Nazification of the Classics, see Fritsch (2001b).

19 Drexler (1939), 3–5.

20 Drexler (1939), 17–18, 5.

that the Third Reich represented a true rebirth of antiquity, and that Classicists' task was to create a new racial aristocracy formed of German *politai*. Any who refused to countenance his new, Aryan interpretation of Graeco-Roman history—particularly former school-teachers (*Pauker*)—were dismissed as “calcified scabs” who must be done away with post-haste.²¹

Similar hostility is evident in a number of articles which defend the concept of humanism as such, but seek to define it in a sufficiently “German” way. Thus Walther Faber, a headmaster in Danzig and one of the journal's most prolific contributors, wrote a fulminating response to an article by the poet and translator Thassilo von Scheffer in *Das Gymnasium* which had refused to consider humanism in racial terms. The fact that Scheffer made no attempt whatsoever to back up his interpretations with reference to writings by Hitler and Rosenberg was intolerable: “They are quite clearly seeking to build a protective wall around the radiant fortress of humanism against the onslaught of the hostile, dark powers of the present.”²² Even worse, the *Gymnasialverein*, the proprietors of the journal, evidently supported Scheffer's stance, since they had not included any editorial note to the contrary. This was obviously an insufferable affront to any National Socialist conception of humanism.²³ Similarly, Hans Bengl, a teacher (*Studienrat*) from Munich, was as scornful of those “*ewig gestrigen Humanisten*” (stick-in-the-mud humanists) who gave the Classics a bad name as he was of the “superficial sceptics who greet the term ‘Antiquity’ with a pitying smirk”: “Certainly there are ivory-tower humanists, whom we ourselves perceive as ballast (but which profession doesn't have such fellow-travelers [*Mitläufer*] to complain of?) ...” Yet he was also contemptuous of those who sought out constant artificial parallels between antiquity and the Third Reich in an attempt merely to safeguard their subject; true, “German” humanists should be able to discover deeper, more worthy connections.²⁴

Professor August Zweymüller, another regular contributor, was even more critical of such indiscriminate presentism: making the subject more relevant certainly did not mean that “one should suddenly perceive every young Greek or Roman as a member of an ancient Hitler Youth organization, or one of the ‘Ten-thousand’ as an SA-man.” Neither should one reinterpret Plato's *Republic* as a National Socialist state simply by picking out the juiciest passages, as some editors of text-collections seemed to have done.²⁵ Instead, one should

21 Haug (1938), 1–4; cf. Roche (2013a), 197–199.

22 Faber (1938), 67–68.

23 Faber (1938), 69.

24 Bengl (1941), 3–4.

25 Zweymüller (1941), 184. For a similar sentiment, see Walter (1938a), 24–25.

explore the true similarities of human nature which underpinned German and ancient sensibilities.²⁶ Zweymüller also inveighed bitterly against those who wished to denounce humanism as un-National Socialist, individualistic, cosmopolitan and pacifist, and blamed its prevalence for the collapse of the Second Reich. Rather, one must find a middle way between “restless revolution” and “curdled conservatism” which could reclaim humanism for the new age; there need be no dichotomy between a humanistic and a National Socialist education, and the study of Classics could even help to select the ruling caste of the future—after all, it had already proved its ability to counteract liberalism and Manchesterism.²⁷ However, if these considerations were not taken into account, Zweymüller concluded on a warning note, then the foreign powers, “filled with hatred against everything German, will triumphantly proclaim the truth of the evil rumor that we are no longer a people of *Dichter und Denker*, but have become—barbarians!”²⁸

Ultimately, however, those who argued for the retention of humanism agreed that it had, above all, to be “German”.²⁹ In practice, this meant that humanistic ideas were no longer permitted to encompass the whole of humanity, but could only be extended to—or appreciated by—the racially pure.³⁰ For the authors of *DAS*, the regime had succeeded in shrinking the boundaries of intellectual *humanitas*, just as, in the wider world, it had systematically excluded those who were not members of the racial community from any humanitarian considerations.

Germanized Language-Teaching

While it was somewhat harder to politicize the many technical discussions of Classical language-teaching which were one of *DAS*’ specialities,³¹ that did

26 Zweymüller (1941), 185.

27 Zweymüller (1941), 182–183, 192.

28 Zweymüller (1941), 192.

29 E.g., Vorwahl (1942), 110, 116; Voit (1937), 62.

30 Cf. Apel and Bittner (1994), 226; Fritsch (2006), 216. On some of the more general consequences of this attitude for Jewish humanists and archaeologists, see the contributions by Porter and Altekamp in this volume.

31 For examples of articles on this topic which seem to have little or no ideological content, see Lundius (1937)—which attacks a work on “Inhaltliches Konstruieren” by Harald Schilling, published by the NSLB *Fachschaft*; also Krause (1938), Ernst Kirchner (1939), Borst (1939 and 1942), and Ott (1940).

not stop many contributors from trying to spice their articles on pedagogical methodology with references to the new ministerial guidelines and the language of race and struggle. Once again, a key component of the new program was the emphasis on the usefulness of learning Latin for consolidating pupils' grasp of the *German* language, and the ways in which it would help them truly to appreciate their German racial heritage.³² From this perspective, becoming a good Latin-pupil could (apparently) also transform you into a good National Socialist.³³ As Otto Wecker, a senior teacher (*Oberstudienrat*) from Göttingen, argued, rather than focusing on the purely theoretical discipline of translating into Latin, language-teaching should focus on one's own language, since today's humanism was utterly conditioned by the present.³⁴ Such an argument could also be used to prove to the *völkisch* "Sturm und Drangers" that "Latin-teaching is a German lesson", as the title of an article by Zweymüller put it.³⁵

In some ways, there seems something surprisingly modern about Rust's curricular stipulation that the main focus of Latin- and Greek-teaching should be idiomatic translation from an ancient text into one's own language, with the aim of fully understanding works by Classical authors, rather than cultivating endless grammar drills and composition.³⁶ Whilst these methods would probably eventually have become the orthodoxy in any case (they had been advocated by philologists such as Georg Rosenthal and Ludwig Mader for years or even decades previously), they first found official favor in the Third Reich.³⁷ This new development also ostensibly fostered fresh cooperation between teachers of Classics and Modern Languages.³⁸ However, the conclusion of *Studienrat* Hermann Lang's article on the mutual compatibility of Latin- and English-teaching seems somewhat less forward-looking:

Both [the English and the Romans] are Nordic farmer- and master-races ..., and in both languages we feel the power which created the Roman Reich and the British Empire, and the proud sense of mission, which animated both races in equal measure ... Thus both languages lead us ... to the same goal ...: to the *Volk*. For the Alpha and Omega of our language-

32 Cf. Rust (1938), 235.

33 Rabenhorst (1937), 21.

34 Wecker (1939a), 50.

35 Zweymüller (1939), 18.

36 Rust (1938), 237; cf. Wecker (1939b).

37 Cf. Fritsch (2006). On contemporary controversies over language-teaching, see Fritsch (2001a), 165–168.

38 Lang (1938a); cf. Gerhards (1938), 11.

teaching is the deep awareness: "As the language is, so also is the nation":
*Wie die Sprache, so das Volk.*³⁹

This emphasis on the *völkisch* nature of language-teaching could lead to some rather strange theories, such as *Oberstudienrat* Egon Kirchner's belief that one could determine key facts about the nature of the Greeks' "racial soul" from studying the sound of Greek words and their etymology.⁴⁰ Ludwig Voit, then a trainee teacher (*Studienassessor*) in Munich, also stressed the importance of the Romans' Nordic character; he believed that the awareness of the struggle between *furor Teutonicus* and Roman imperialism would awaken in young Germans a love and appreciation of their own racial heritage—this, too, formed part of Voit's theory of "German humanism".⁴¹

Finally, authors also appealed to the "training of the will" which battling with Classical texts was supposed to impart;⁴² in school-inspector Ernst Kirchner's view, Latin was the perfect subject for showing exactly what a boy was made of, "not only in intellectual terms, but in terms of will to work, depth, fortitude and orderliness".⁴³ His militaristic peroration, an encomium on the virtues of Latin-teaching, ran as follows:

Beginning with the content, one can strengthen the lads' instinct for conquest and discovery! One can throw the grammatical ballast which we're still lugging around overboard! In short, one can rank Latin-teaching at the battle-front of those subjects which have been enlisted to develop intellectual independence, to form the intellect through hard work and train it to be capable of leadership.⁴⁴

In this way, even the most technical aspects of Classical pedagogy were evaluated in utilitarian terms which left them subject to a vulgar presentism, a desperation constantly to prove their functionality in the National Socialist present. This tendency, as we might suspect, was even more marked in those articles which dealt more exclusively with the teaching of Latin and Greek literature and culture.

39 Lang (1938a), 23.

40 Egon Kirchner (1940), esp. 123, 126.

41 Voit (1937), 62–63.

42 Cf. Wecker (1939a), 60.

43 Ernst Kirchner (1942), 98.

44 Ernst Kirchner (1942), 99.

Gegenwärtiges Altertum

As Ludwig Voit pointed out in the introduction to his *DAS* article on “Montesquieu’s portrayal of Augustus”, any scholarly endeavor, however objective its intentions, could be susceptible to distortion by contemporary concerns and value judgments.⁴⁵ Voit’s comment prefaced an elaborate rationalization of Montesquieu’s negative verdict on Rome’s first emperor, who, according to contemporary standards (and Rust’s curricular guidelines) ought to be glorified as a suitably Nordic Führer-figure.

However, much the same accusation could be levelled not only at Voit’s own work, but also at very many contributions to *DAS*, particularly those which served as guides to how to read or select suitably politicizable passages from the set texts on offer, often focusing on Caesar, Cicero, Horace, Livy, Homer, Plato, Xenophon, and Greek tragedy.⁴⁶ Many of the articles reveal implicit bias even in their titles, often including the adjectives “*politisch*”, “*rassenpolitisch*”, or “*nationalpolitisch*”—*Studienrat* Julius Weisweiler’s “*Griechischer Lyrik im Dienste politischer Erziehung*” (Greek lyric poetry in the service of political education) being a case in point. Through a comprehensive discussion of poems by Tyrtaos, Theognis and Solon, Weisweiler aimed to provide pupils with the will and courage to tackle “the great political problems of the present”, implicitly comparing these ancient Greek “leaders and statesmen” with Hitler himself.⁴⁷ In similar vein, *Studienassessor* Otto Walter’s article on “Sparta in Greek-teaching” praised the ancient Spartans in particular for their exemplary warrior spirit, which had so much to teach pupils both racially and politically:

Capitalism, socialism, peasantry and land-reform, political intrigue and factionalism no longer remain empty concepts; here [the pupils] see all the forces in play which have ruled states and peoples from that time onward, and founded or undermined their power. Then they are qualified and ready to learn from the Lycurgan state, as described by Plutarch, or from fourth-century Sparta, and to hear from Plato and Aristotle what

45 Voit (1941), 97.

46 For an in-depth discussion of Nazi pedagogical articles on Livy, including two from *DAS*, see Doms (2012). On Xenophon’s treatment in *DAS* contributions, see Roche (2016a), also the case-study on Schmidt (1937) below. For more on this type of politicized teaching at university level, see Altekamp in this volume.

47 Weisweiler (1942), 101, 113.

the state of the Spartans has to say and to teach us Germans of the Third Reich.⁴⁸

Latin literature fared no better; Hermann Lang's contribution on "Readings of Cicero in the service of national-political education" traced connections with National Socialist thought in Cicero's life and work, though conceding that there were limits to the Roman's understanding. Since he had been brought up as a noble (somewhat akin to an "English gentleman"), Cicero's innate conservatism did not allow him to acknowledge the proletariat's right to citizenship, nor was his vision of the *res publica* far-reaching enough; most importantly, he had been unable to grasp that "blood and race" were key to any conception of the state.⁴⁹ Lang concluded that:

... we too must consider Cicero as a fully valid witness of true Romanness, and as the trailblazer of the Roman Führer-state ... Through lively examination of his progress and character, *we* wish to lay the foundations of *our* state deeper yet, so that nothing more may shake them!⁵⁰

Meanwhile, Alfred Engelhardt laced his analysis of Horace's poetry with quotations from *Mein Kampf*, attempting to prove that these Latin texts could "transmit to our youth those impulses from antiquity which lead to ... racial strength", and claiming that the Third Reich was in a much better position now than the Roman Empire had ever been, since "the German people today is practically racially pure", whereas "one can hardly speak any longer of a Roman people in the racial sense during Augustus' time".⁵¹ The means by which the German people had gained its vaunted "purity" remains unmentioned, perhaps unsurprisingly.

However, the best possible way to prove the relevance of Latin-teaching was to focus upon Roman authors' depictions of the ancient Germanic tribes, which obviously formed a key aspect of the curriculum. Strangely enough, it seems as if a number of the articles on this topic were written in a less overtly ideological fashion (one might even wonder whether the mere choice of theme was sufficient in itself to prove one's political loyalty and guarantee publication); nevertheless, the nature of the arguments deployed and the subject

48 Walter (1938b), 102. For more on Spartan reception in National Socialist educational propaganda, see Roche (2012), Roche (2013b), 203–232 and Roche (2016b).

49 Lang (1938b), 52–53.

50 Lang (1938b), 54 (emphasis original).

51 Engelhardt (1942), 39.

matter chosen still seem to have been shaped by a desire to engage with this most *völkisch* of topics.⁵² Perhaps this was also a function of the Classicists' desire to assert their prerogative over the Johnny-come-lately *Volkstumskundler* (Germanic folklorists and historians); they were desperate to consolidate their position as the only true interpreters and illuminators of the life of Arminius and other Germanic heroes.⁵³ Some of the articles go to exhaustive lengths to try and elucidate the exact details of Arminius' campaigns, such as *Studienrat* Johannes Holtermann's "Where did Arminius beat the Romans?", or emphasize the importance of taking Roman authors' historiographical context into account.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, others portray Arminius as sentimentally as possible, declaring him "a blazing figure" at the dawn of German history, or linking his tale with Nordic mythology.⁵⁵ Yet others simply rehearse ancient Germanic battles with the Romans in great detail, such as Wilhelm Rögels' "The struggle for freedom of the Batavi under Julius Civilis" (though the hero is at one point compared with Hindenburg), or *Studienrat* Rudolf Ebeling's "Undervalued Heroism: A contribution to the reading of Caesar's *Gallie War*".⁵⁶ Caesar is also criticized for presenting a biased portrayal of Ariovistus, the first ever "historically tangible Germanic Führer-personality"; the Germans were never as stupid as Caesar makes out, yet, despite his specious reporting and dishonorable behavior, his high estimation of the tribes' great bravery as warriors will become immediately apparent to pupils. Thus "a sensibly-steered reading of Caesar can ... fulfil its highest aim, *to serve the advancement of German national pride*".⁵⁷

"Rassenwahn"

It will probably have become clear by this point that racial theories and Nazi racial ideology underpinned much of the rationale behind *DAs* authors' selection of material; antiquity was only considered so valuable for illuminating the present because of the alleged ancestral relationship between the Nordic

52 For examples of this tendency, see Schleiermacher (1937), Holtermann (1938), Petrikovits (1938), and Lohrisch (1940).

53 Dirlmeier (1937); Oppermann (1937).

54 Dirlmeier (1937); Holtermann (1938); Bux (1942).

55 Schleiermacher (1939), 108; Holtermann (1942), 145; Thomas (1942).

56 Ebeling (1937); Rögels (1942), 129.

57 Schönfeld (1938), 54, 58 (emphasis original); cf. Krüger (1941).

Greeks and Romans and the Nordic German people.⁵⁸ Rainer Nickel has even used the term *Rassenwahn* (racial madness or delusion) to describe Classicists' constant use of racial terminology to elucidate and update their subject.⁵⁹ Most often, contributors would use templates and terminologies developed by Nazi racial theorists such as the notorious Hans Günther (colloquially known as the "race pope") and Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler's chief ideologue.⁶⁰ Put simply, they believed that it was always the fate of Nordic, culture-bearing races to conquer peoples weaker than themselves; however, this victory would inevitably bear the seeds of its own destruction, if racial mixing between the Nordic conquerors and the lesser races ensued (particularly if they contained Asiatic or Semitic blood). According to this rationale, antiquity not only provided myriad examples of the glorious triumphs of Nordic warrior races, but also of their destruction through blood defilement (de-Nordification or *Entnordung*).⁶¹

While we have already encountered a few examples of this racial creed in the *DAS* articles previously discussed, some contributions are particularly obsessed with the Nordic question.⁶² Just to take one example, considerations of Nordic blood often come to the fore when authors turn their attention to Attic—and particularly Sophoclean—tragedy. Thus, Engelhardt begins his article on *Oedipus Rex* with the claim that Oedipus is "the heroic child of Aryan myth", comparing him with Wagner's Siegfried. "Sophocles sees his hero as a penetration of Nordic character into the era of Classical Greece ..., a

58 It is worth noting that Greece was often considered to be more closely akin to Germany than Rome—an extension of the "spiritual kinship" posited by the great eighteenth-century German philhellenists such as Goethe and Winckelmann; for more on this, see Roche (2013a). Examples of this tendency can be found both in Rust's curricular guidelines (1938, 231–232) and in articles in *DAS*, such as Deubel (1937) and Günther (1940).

59 Nickel (1972), 503.

60 For a detailed analysis of Günther and Rosenberg's race-driven "historical credo" (*Geschichtsdogmatik*), see Apel and Bittner (1994), 243–269; for more on the historiographical background, see Wiedemann in this volume.

61 For an in-depth discussion of the origins and development of this interpretative framework, as well as its deployment in educational material, see Roche (2017). For *DAS* articles which particularly embrace the racial "decline and fall" formula, see Steeger (1937) and Glaser (1939a).

62 E.g., Walter (1938a); further examples include Faber (1939), whose analysis of ancient art is completely saturated with Günther-esque racial conceptions, and Kraiker (1939), a "research report" which admirably demonstrates the intersection between racialized scholarship and pedagogical literature, and relies for its authority on a closed circle of mutually-reinforcing pseudo-scholarship (much as the works of Holocaust deniers do today).

pure portrayal of ancient Greek racial feeling not long before its downfall in blood-mixing with freed slaves and emancipated metics ...”⁶³ Franz Joachim, meanwhile, was more impressed with the *Antigone*: “There is scarcely a tragedy among the masterworks of the great Greek dramatists in which the Nordic racial idea, the binding law of blood, appears so strikingly ...”⁶⁴ The rest of his article was devoted to demonstrating all the manifold ways in which the heroine adheres to this commandment. According to Joachim, Creon’s fate proved that the law of the blood must always triumph—he had to be punished for his disregard of the highest commandment of the Graeco-Nordic race-soul.⁶⁵

Interestingly, anti-Semitism, the other side of this racial coin, receives surprisingly little attention in the pages of *DAS*.⁶⁶ Some authors occasionally took it upon themselves to pour scorn upon the work of Jewish scholars; the insinuation seemed to be that no Jew could possibly be capable of interpreting Classical texts in a worthy fashion. Hence Engelhardt’s castigation of the author and poet Herbert Eulenberg for creating a “vulgarized, superficial pseudo-Horace” who combined “stale eroticism” with “sickly, senile self-mockery” (presumably with reference to Eulenberg’s book *Neue Bilder. Horaz bis Wagner*, first published in 1912).⁶⁷ The most likely ancient candidates to be accused of “Jewishness” were Socrates and/or the Sophists, Euripides, the Etruscans, and (of course), the suitably “Semitic” Carthaginians.⁶⁸ However, only a couple of articles confront the “Jewish question” head on; in 1942, Alfred Maschke undertook an in-depth analysis of Cicero’s attitude to Jews in the *Pro Flacco*, while E. Staedler put forward an exhaustive survey of the number three in Horace, concluding that its appearance was always connected with Roman hatred of the disruptive effects of the Jewish Sabbath.⁶⁹ We can only speculate whether

63 Engelhardt (1940), 1.

64 Joachim (1941), 51.

65 Joachim (1941), 51–55; for a very similar interpretation, see Glaser (1938). Ironically, given the National Socialist propensity for picking out “Führer-figures” from Classical literature (see further below), Creon is never presented as a paradigm.

66 On this tendency more generally, see Malitz (1998, 532), citing Hoffmann (1988).

67 Engelhardt (1942), 35; cf. Gohlke’s criticisms of Werner Jaeger’s Jewish connections (1939, 122).

68 E.g., Deubel (1937), 6; Steeger (1937), 89; Gerlach (1939), 68–70; Feller (1940), 105. Interestingly, Vorwahl (1940, 149–150) tries to delegitimize this interpretation in his article on the Etruscans.

69 Staedler (1942); Maschke (1942). One might perhaps compare this absence with Wildmann’s depiction (in his contribution to this volume) of the Jew as “the theme that goes unseen” in Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia*.

the sheer lunacy of the NSLB *Fachschaft's* more rabid anti-Semitic theories meant that even *DAS* editor Friedrich Eichhorn was unwilling to publish them, until wartime constraints began to reduce the overall number of submissions to the journal.

The Consequences of War

By 1942, the effects of the Second World War were very much beginning to make themselves felt, even among the Classics teachers' community. Pupils' academic capability was said to be ever-decreasing, as was the amount of lesson-time available.⁷⁰ Worse still, there had arisen a grave shortage of skilled Latin teachers, since so many young men had been called up; their places were being taken by an older generation of Germanists, modern linguists, mathematicians and scientists who had probably not touched a Latin primer since their own *Gymnasium* days. In a desperate attempt to ameliorate the situation, Walther Faber wrote a helpful thirty-point plan to help these poor substitutes reorient their ideas, both pedagogically and politically, including a helpful bibliography of the most "indispensable" items of ideological literature (needless to say, *DAS* itself featured prominently on the list).⁷¹

However, there were still ways in which the current state of war could be seen as benefiting the Classics—or vice versa. Thus, *Studienrat* Heinz Panitz saw the fact that "youth are always taking part in military affairs nowadays" as providing an excellent opportunity to interest pupils in the finer points of Caesar's *Galic War*, particularly if one used colored maps and diagrams of the armies' movements to bring the battles to life.⁷² More cynically, Wilhelm Rögels saw the content of many Classical texts as providing a means to spur the young on to fight, and, if necessary, to die. In an article which aimed to promote readings of Greek literature which would train pupils' military spirit (*Wehrgeistige Erziehung*), and which devoted much space to the most militaristic elements of Spartan history, Xenophon and Herodotus (particularly focusing on Leonidas and Themistocles), Rögels came to the following conclusion:

Thus, the teaching of Greek texts offers us lavish opportunities for a fruitful training in the military spirit. To a very marked degree, it can

⁷⁰ Panitz (1941), 154; Muth (1942), 131.

⁷¹ Faber (1942), 41–45.

⁷² Panitz (1941), 155.

and should contribute to the inner readiness of our pupils for military service, once they have ended their school careers. A great responsibility lies upon the shoulders of the *Gymnasium* teacher, more today than ever before. We must ensure, more intensively than ever before, that ... a youthful generation will arise which, supported by a deep love of fighting and weaponry, will prove itself worthy of the youths who once, at Langemarck, knew how to die gladly with the German national anthem on their lips.⁷³

Ideology in Practice: How to Read the *Anabasis* in the Third Reich

It seems appropriate to conclude this brief survey with a more detailed case-study, demonstrating how many of the ideological and propagandistic concerns described above could actually be contained in a single article—in this case, a guide to reading Xenophon's *Anabasis*, entitled "The teaching of Xenophon's *Feldzugserinnerungen* in National Socialist schools", by Kurt Schmidt.⁷⁴

Even the article's title, where Schmidt construes the Greek "*Anabasis*" as "campaign memoirs", has an explicitly propagandistic aim. Schmidt tells us that Xenophon's account must be treated just like any other "war story" which pupils will already have read in German; there must be no criticism of its objectivity, since any inkling that the account might not be completely reliable might lead pupils to question "the ethical profit of the reading" which he is advocating (pp. 14–15). All sources which portray a variant perspective upon the events described in the *Anabasis* should therefore be passed over in silence; pupils do not "need to know" of their very existence—even though Schmidt's comments show that he is well aware of Xenophon's bias and potential unreliability as a historical source. In Schmidt's own words: "Any attempt at a critical treatment—even ... through comparative consultation with other texts—is to be shunned" (p. 15). Treating the *Anabasis* critically as a historical document, therefore, is "the *one thing* which teachers should guard against", at risk of

73 Rögels (1941), 77. The Battle of Langemarck (November 1914) was one of Germany's bloodiest battles in the First World War, and possesses the same sort of resonance in Germany as the Battle of the Somme does in Britain. A powerful patriotic myth of sacrificial heroism built up around the regiments of young volunteers who gave their lives, which was frequently put to propagandistic use by the Nazis, often alongside other examples of heroic self-sacrifice, such as the Battle of Thermopylae. See also p. 419 below.

74 Schmidt (1937); page references are given in the text.

debasing its great propagandistic and educational value, which “secures the *Anabasis* pride of place in the schools of the Third Reich” (p. 14; emphasis original).

Schmidt describes this value primarily in terms of the concept of “*Wirkung*” (impact)—this word and its cognates appear more than half a dozen times in the article as a whole. Rather than giving a balanced overview of the *Anabasis*, Schmidt declares that “our task is far more to pick out tactically from the whole work those passages which possess a particularly valuable ethical quality, and hence pedagogical impact ... and to emphasize these ‘core passages’ strikingly in lessons (*diese “Kernstellen” im Unterricht wirkungsvoll herauszustellen*)” (p. 14). Although the “core passages” may be supplemented by others (p. 17), nevertheless, the selection of passages for study must ensure their “pedagogical impact” (*erzieherische Wirkung*) in holding up an example of military manhood and good leadership, which must be the principal task of reading Xenophon at schools in the new Germany (p. 14).

In general, Schmidt therefore recommends that teachers should focus upon “the majority of the first book, the most important passages from book two [mainly in the first chapter], the first two chapters of the third book (with omissions), and the fourth book in its entirety as far as possible” (p. 18). The later books, meanwhile, should largely be dispensed with, not only because Schmidt perceives them to be of inferior descriptive quality, which might detract from the impact made by the earlier books, but also because he considers that they portray Xenophon and the Ten Thousand as gradually sinking to the level of mere “*Landsknechte*” (mercenary troopers)—even though this had of course been their role all along, as Cyrus’ hirelings in an attempted dynastic coup. Schmidt also castigates Xenophon himself for becoming more and more defensive and given to high-flown apology, proving himself to be out of his depth when it comes to disciplining his men in the absence of Cheirisophos (p. 19).⁷⁵

Perhaps surprisingly, Schmidt is not overly concerned with pointing out cultural parallels between ancient Germany and ancient Greece, although he does do so in a number of places—for instance, commenting on *Anab.* 6.1, he suggests that the sword dance of the Thracians is “thoroughly identical” with that of the ancient Germans (p. 19). He also praises Xenophon’s wisdom in “warning against sexual intercourse with the Medes and Persians” (p. 17; cf.

75 This has troubling implications for Schmidt’s portrayal of Xenophon as a proto-Hitlerian “Führer-personality” (see further below), and thus ensures that books 5–7 will not be privileged in Schmidt’s recommended reading of the work.

Anab. 3.2.25–26): “Xenophon rightly foresaw the danger which menaced both the Greek peoples in the Hellenistic age, and the Germanic peoples of the Roman Empire during the age of migrations!” A final, lengthy excursus linking Xenophon’s reluctance to sacrifice a horse sacred to the sun god (*Anab.* 4.5.35) with Germanic beliefs in the sacred nature of horses allows Schmidt to close the article with the conventional Hitlerian platitude (from *Mein Kampf*) that “today we have a culture to defend which ‘unites the millennia, and embraces both Greekdom (*Griechentum*) and Germanism (*Germanentum*)!’” (p. 20).⁷⁶

Schmidt’s real aim, however, is to highlight the contemporary relevance of Xenophon’s work, focusing in particular upon three aspects of the text. Firstly, he emphasizes the way in which the exploits of the Ten Thousand can spur pupils on through their portrayal of soldierly manliness (*soldatische Mannes-tum*). Secondly, he draws frequent parallels between episodes in the *Anabasis* and events or occurrences in more recent German history, and, leading on from this, he attempts throughout to portray Xenophon as the embodiment of a “Führer-personality”; an avatar of Hitler.⁷⁷

Schmidt cannot praise enough the “victorious bravado” of the Greek hoplites, with their “self-evidently soldierly mind-set, through which they conquer want, exertion, illness and plague with their powerfully steeled and sportingly trained bodies; the steadfast will, with which at first they master the seemingly unfeasible task of the march back through land which is unknown, hostile, and often very hard to traverse ...” (p. 14). He sees these traits as part of that same Nordic power which allowed Alexander “to bring Greek rule to the entire Middle East ... with only a couple of thousand Nordic warriors [*sic*]” (p. 15). The values which Schmidt highlights in these passages promulgate the necessity of toughness, war-readiness and the desire to die a heroic death for the Fatherland (a trait which Schmidt sees mirrored in the “*kalōs apothanein*” sentiment of the speeches at *Anab.* 3.2—pp. 16–17). These are the values, by implication, which must be instilled in—and should readily be accepted by—National Socialist youth.

76 Other examples include a comparison of *Anab.* 4.7 with Florus’ depiction of the behavior of Cimbrian women after the battle of Vercellae (Florus 1.38; p. 18), as well as references to the shared Greek and Germanic belief in the sanctity of oaths (*Anab.* 2.5.3 ff.; p. 16) and pride in the deeds of their ancestors (*Anab.* 3.2.11; p. 17).

77 For other *DAS* articles which emphasize the importance of finding suitable “Führer-personalities” in the Classical texts being discussed, see Steeger (1937) and Forstner (1939) on Livy, Lang (1938b) on Cicero, Büchler (1939) on Tacitus’ portrayal of Caecina, and Engelhardt (1940 and 1942) on Oedipus and Augustus respectively.

More explicitly, Schmidt points to the Greeks' "heroic" ability to bear all kinds of ills in their struggles with the Kurds, Armenians, and harsh winter weather of the fourth book:

Again and again ... we are struck anew by the psychological power of a manly mind-set which forces back and conquers all difficulties, which will also electrify our youth at any time. This soldierly manliness seems at the same time something so self-evident that the author does not waste a single superfluous word on it—and that, too, will impress our lads.

p. 17

Meanwhile, Schmidt leaves no opportunity unexplored to point out contemporary parallels which should also be impressed upon pupils. The depiction of the Battle of Kunaxa (*Anab.* 1.8, 1.10) must, he states, be read in its entirety, because its military-historical aspect will arouse the deepest interest following the reinstatement of the *Wehrmacht* (p. 15). Cheirisophos' speech (*Anab.* 3.2) is likened in its "laconic brevity" and content to the sentiments expressed by Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934) in his last report to the Army High Command in June 1919, while the idea expressed by Xenophon at *Anab.* 3.2.19 that men, not horses, win the battle, is likened to Felix Graf von Luckner's expostulation that "men fight, not ships!"

However, the passage which Schmidt considers to be of the most paramount importance is that dealing with the Greeks' negotiations with the Great King (*Anab.* 2.1.7–23):

[This passage] must under no circumstances be passed over! On the contrary, here, this first and basic demand which [the Great King] makes of the Greeks, who have nevertheless remained the victors in the battle, conforms with nothing other than: *Disarmament!* The comparison with Germany's situation in 1918–1919 will impose itself on the pupils completely spontaneously ...

p. 16

Yet, during that "most terrible and dangerous night", when the leaderless Greeks are surely at their lowest ebb, they, too (as the Germans did) find a savior—in Xenophon! Schmidt comments:

Above all, [Xenophon's] decision [to lead the Ten Thousand to safety] (*Anab.* 3.1.13–14) in its particulars evokes spontaneously and so strongly the mission of the deliverer from Germany's affliction and ignominy

(*die Berufung des Retters aus Deutschlands Not und Schmach*), that in an adroitly-managed class the allusion [to Hitler] will be suggested by the pupils themselves.

p. 16

Indeed, even at the very beginning of the article, Xenophon had been portrayed in a way which suggested parallels with Hitler; as “a leader who, solely through the power of his superior mastery, brings cohesion to the masses—who are not always easily led—and yet, in defiance of all dangers, brings them safely to their goal ...” (p. 14). Now, Xenophon’s army has become the German state, and the real night on the Persian plain becomes the metaphorical night of German despair in the aftermath of the Treaty of Versailles.

This portrayal of Xenophon as a prototype “Führer” reaches its apogee when Schmidt claims that his speech at *Anab.* 3.1.38–42, where he dilates upon the necessity of leadership and discipline, and claims that superior numbers and raw strength do not win battles, but rather the will of the spirit, “instantaneously recall the saying of the Führer (*Führerwort*): ‘Lord, let us never be cowardly! A people with weapons can resist its enemies, *but only the power of its soul leads it to victory!*’” (p. 16). Xenophon is being portrayed here as a great dictator *avant la lettre*—hence the need to shield pupils from any mention of his growing insecurity and defensiveness from book five onwards.

In general terms, then, Schmidt’s article can be seen as exemplifying *par excellence* the all-pervasive tendency in National Socialist historiography in general, and in *DAS* contributions in particular, to pick and choose interpretations based solely upon current propaganda needs, as well as the ever-present desire to cast the history of any peoples who could remotely be claimed as “Aryan” in a mould which prefigured the National Socialist state. Similarly, any strong leader-figure had to be portrayed as foreshadowing the rise of Hitler himself. In this context, history must have seemed doomed forever to repeat itself ...

Conclusion

The contributors to *DAS* came from a wide variety of backgrounds, although university professors and teachers on the lowest administrative level (*Studienräte*) were most broadly represented.⁷⁸ It seems likely that, for younger teach-

⁷⁸ Wherever possible, I have indicated the status of the contributors whose work I have

ers, collaboration with the NSLB might have seemed to provide a tantalizing recipe for subsequent professional success. Meanwhile, professors who wished to nail their new ideological colors to the mast might have seen *DAS* as a useful forum in which to advertise their political correctness, and perhaps gain themselves some useful publicity.

However, this is not to say that all the contributions to the journal were equally ideological. In fact, I was surprised to discover that there were quite a few articles which seemed to contain little or no politicized content—and others which simply topped and tailed an otherwise fairly innocuous essay with an introduction and conclusion which pressed the right racial or political buttons.⁷⁹ This was even true of some of the contributions by professors such as Wolfgang Aly and Hans Oppermann, whose pro-Nazi sympathies were notoriously prominent during their tenure at Freiburg University.⁸⁰

Perhaps this observation can be explained by the argument put forward by Hans Jürgen Apel and Stefan Bittner, namely, that only a relatively small percentage of Classics teachers were actually convinced Nazis.⁸¹ In that case, it might never have been possible at this stage of the Third Reich's development to fill an entire journal with contributions which toed the Party line (which most of the less committed NSLB members would have found unreadable in any case). Perhaps closet opponents of the regime, such as Eduard Bornemann, thought it more fitting to submit inoffensive articles on how to tackle the trickiest passages of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and keep the flame of humanism going in some form, than simply to sit back and let the fanatics take the field.

Nevertheless, there are indications that, had the Third Reich not been defeated in 1945, the more politicized style of teaching and the more ideological type of pedagogical material (which did still predominate throughout the periodical's existence) would ultimately have won out. Once the older generation of teachers who had made their careers in the Weimar Republic or even the Second Reich had made their way through the system, the Nazified

discussed. However, in some cases, no such information is available. I am very grateful to Elizabeth Roche for helping me to collate the necessary data.

79 Less ideological articles include the two "research reports" by Herbig (1939, 1940); also Bornemann (1939, 1941, 1942), Franke (1939), Glaser (1939b), Hagenow (1940), Neugebauer (1941), Schreibmüller (1941), and Fensterbusch (1942).

80 Cf. Malitz (2006); on Oppermann, see also Malitz (1998). cf. e.g., Aly (1937)—an ideological "sandwich job", Oppermann (1938), and Aly (1939–1940).

81 Apel and Bittner (1994), esp. 324–344; cf. also Bittner (2001).

version of Classics and ancient history would not only have dominated, it would have been the only accessible paradigm for pupils and trainee teachers alike.⁸² The Classicists who contributed to *DAS* were not “reactionary modernists”, perhaps, but in their anxious, panicked attempts to modernize their reactionary discipline, and thus ensure its survival after the plague of the National Socialist “revolution” had passed over, they inevitably opened the gates of the “shining fortress of humanism” to the dark forces without (often revelling in their new-found relevance as they did so).

Perhaps the most substantial impression given by an overview of the journal's content as a whole is one of defensiveness and insecurity. The members of the NSLB *Sachgebiet für Alte Sprachen* were not only forced to wrangle with outsiders who could not see the importance of humanism, or even saw it as *volksfeindlich*, a danger to the nation; they were also obliged to fight to uphold their own definition of humanism, or to justify the importance of their preferred Classical texts. There was a constant struggle afoot to interpret the Reich Education Ministry's curricular guidelines in the ways most favorable to one's own preferences and prejudices, and it was not even always clear whether Classics as a discipline should still retain its focus on the culture of Greece and Rome, or whether it should simply concentrate on illuminating ancient historical intersections with Germanic culture. From this perspective, the behavior of this subsection of Classicists during the Third Reich seems in some sense to have mirrored the quarrelsome, anarchic disunity and sycophantic culture of “working towards the Führer” which permeated the entire Nazi state.

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82 For some rather muted reflections on this possibility, see Apel and Bittner (1994), 357–358.

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Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda

Arthur J. Pomeroy

Authorities in both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany put much effort into ensuring that the means of mass communication were widely diffused. Radios became a common feature of most households by the late 1930s.¹ The number of theaters projecting films also increased exponentially, from purpose-built “palaces” at one end of the scale to country halls where live entertainment might also be offered at the other.² In Germany, there was even experimental television programming. All this was consonant with the official view that the prevalent ideology was shared by society as a whole. Traditional theatrical displays, open-air rallies, or the leader’s orations to the masses were still important, but mass media turned these from localized events into true “totalitarian” productions. Mussolini’s speeches from the Palazzo Venezia balcony and Hitler’s harangues at the Nuremberg rallies were filmed, and still circulate widely today.³

Given the interest in mass communication through visual images, partly opportunistic in nature, but also arising from a desire to use modern technology that is a feature of both the Fascist and Nazi ethos, it is surprising that political propaganda plays such a minor role in the feature films of Germany and Italy. Despite official interest in classical antiquity as a source for art and architecture, only one notable film set in antiquity, Carmine Gallone’s *Scipione l’Africano*, was produced in this period. This chapter seeks to offer some explanation for this paradox.

1 In Germany, for instance, by 1939, seventy per cent of households owned a radio: Tegel (2007), 18. Numbers in Italy were considerably less—about half a million sets in 1935: Petrakis (2006), 68.

2 Hay (2007), Appendix A.

3 Contrast Greece, where Metaxas’ short stature and lack of ability as a public speaker made the creation of a cult of personality as in Italy and Germany almost impossible: Petrakis (2006). Radio sets were rare (6,000 in 1935), although about twenty-five per cent of the population attended the cinema regularly: Petrakis (2006), 68.

Documentary Film

In Italy, the importance of state-controlled documentaries, particularly newsreels that could be shown at all film screenings, was recognized very soon after Mussolini's 1922 march on Rome. Umberto Paradisi's *A Noi* (1923) is a sanitized version of the events of 24–29 November 1922, beginning with the congress of the Fascist Party in Naples before moving to the actual march on the capital.⁴ Instead of appearing as individual squads, the Fascist forces appear as well-disciplined forces formed into divisions. Rather than resulting from internal political conflict, the march is portrayed as a response to appeals from Dalmatia, where the consequences of D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume (present-day Rijeka) in support of the Italian-speaking population were still being worked out. Obviously, threats of military force are adumbrated, but the film shows only watchfires and torches, not acts of Fascist violence. The subtitle, *Dalla sagra di Napoli al trionfo di Roma*, further emphasizes this sanitization: since a *sagra* is an open-air rural festival with music, dancing, and games, the victory of the Fascist movement appears to stem from its respect for traditional Italian values, in contrast with Bolshevik hallucinations of international solidarity. *A Noi* is therefore both a call for support for the Party ("Join us") and a vision of a reborn Italy, free from the civic strife and political disappointments that followed the First World War.

Not surprisingly, then, Mussolini personally supported the creation in 1924 of LUCE (L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa: "Syndicate for Education through Film"), which by 1925 had become a state-owned company. LUCE's newsreels showed a Fascist Italy, united and peaceful, on its way to becoming a modern power, and governed by a single, charismatic leader. Within these documentaries, certain developments are visible. The regime's assistance for the rural poor was stressed in the 1920s. Since modern Italy had previously been mainly known internationally for the mass migration of its impoverished masses, this was a particularly notable development. In the early 1930s, the newsreels celebrated a concordant, upwardly mobile Italy. Finally, from the mid-1930s, Italy was shown as a militarized modern nation ready to resume its historical role as the dominant power in the Mediterranean. During these years, the image of Mussolini changes from the head of the Fascist movement, first among equals, to the nation's guide, fulfilling his undisputed role as *Il Duce*.⁵ Such is his portrait in *Mussolini Speaks* (1932), a feature-length documentary distributed by

4 For a discussion of *A Noi* in a Fascist context, see Ferrari (2010), 95–112.

5 Hay (1987), 222–232.

Columbia Pictures, with narration by Edgar G. Ulmer.⁶ A far cry from the typical Italian gangster of Hollywood (such as Paul Muni in *Scarface* [1932]), Mussolini is the hero of a narrative that shows him overcoming the obstacles in his way, even exposing his own body to wounds in World War One, before taking political responsibility for his nation in 1922. He is a man who builds roads and railways and hydroelectric dams within Italy, and the diplomatic equal of the representatives of Great Britain and the United States on the international stage.

Within Italy, not everyone attended the cinema regularly, but the large number of theaters opening during this period, and the possibility of enjoying entertainment for as little as one lira, makes it probable that the majority did.⁷ Audiences were likely to be going to see foreign films, particularly American ones, which in the 1930s made up three-quarters of all releases.⁸ However, from 1926, all theaters were required to show the LUCE newsreels, which themselves illustrate the close relationship between filmmaking and the ruling Party. For instance, a series of newsreels in 1936–1937 reported the making of *Scipione l'Africano*, culminating in the visit of Mussolini himself to the Battle of Zama film set at the new Fascist city of Sabaudia. At the Italian première of the film, a long documentary showed *Il Duce's* triumphant reception at Catania, where he celebrated the success of the Abyssinian campaign, justifying Italy's actions on the grounds that "history shows that unwarlike peoples cannot escape the alternatives of either misery or slavery". The inauguration of a state-owned film studio at Rome, Cinecittà, on April 21, 1937 (the traditional date for the founding of the city by Romulus and Remus), under the banner "la cinematografia è l'arma più forte" ("Film is the strongest weapon we possess") was again widely publicized in newsreels. The new studio and the nearby Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, a film school opened in 1935, were seen as essential for the development of the Italian film industry. Government demands for autarky, self-sufficiency in the face of League of Nations sanctions, and a nationalist desire to match the industrial output of other nations, especially the United States, required more Italian productions.

In Germany, likewise, the National Socialists recognized the value of obtaining the greatest possible favorable publicity via newsreels. Initially, favorable reports of Nazi activities and attacks on their enemies could be left to sympathetic industrialists such as Alfred Hugenberg, who owned a string of newspa-

6 Ricci (2008), 138.

7 By 1927, cinema already accounted for over half of all Italian entertainment returns.

8 Hay (1987), Appendix c.

pers and the film company UFA (Universum Film AG). But after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, a series of purchases by finance companies operating to disguise government involvement meant that, by 1939, all the major German film companies were indirectly state-owned. Finally, in 1940, the four newsreels, UFA-Tonwoche, Deulig-Tonwoche, Tobis-Woche, and Fox-Tönende Wochenschau, were consolidated into a single organ of propaganda, the Deutsche Wochenschau.

Italy and Germany observed and took lessons from one another. The setting up of the *Direzione generale della cinematografia* in 1934, with Luigi Freddi as its director, echoed the *Reichsfilmkammer* (1933), whose director reported to the president of the *Reichskulturkammer*, Joseph Goebbels. Both politicians portrayed the crises in their industries as stemming not from economic difficulties during the Great Depression, but rather from the inability of filmmakers to represent national taste, spirit and aspirations. However, Goebbels sought to remake German cinema, root and branch. The consequent loss of many actors and technicians appalled Freddi,⁹ but German and Italian rivalry continued. For instance, the Italians felt that the Germans had managed to create an exaggerated image of their assistance to the Phalangists in the Spanish Civil War, in comparison with Italian efforts. Yet there was also no denying that the German film crews were technically superior, operated better equipment, and were able to get their documentary material into the cinema much more rapidly than their Italian counterparts.¹⁰

Nowhere is this technical discrepancy more obvious than in the 1930s documentaries of Leni Riefenstahl, whose three records of the Nuremberg rallies of 1933, 1934, and 1935 (*Der Sieg des Glaubens*, *Triumph des Willens*, *Tag der Freiheit*) and the Berlin Olympics of 1936 (*Olympia*) remain models for the genre. The success of these films, however, relies as much on the sheer amount of support provided on Hitler's own orders as on the director's own vision of events. Because Riefenstahl was only answerable to the Führer and not to other Party officials, she was able to film following a personal agenda, not a regular formula. For instance, the arrival of Hitler at Nuremberg in 1934 is filmed as a descent from the clouds, in line with romantic notions about the individual asserting himself against his environment, a theme associated with the Bergfilm tradi-

9 Freddi visited Germany in 1936. On his return, he stated that governmental interference in the film industry in that country had only made things worse. This was due to the violent nature of its intervention and the ill effects of the removal of Jews who "in Germany as in all the world—excluding Italy—used to dominate and predominate in the field of cinema": Dalla Pria (2012), 19.

10 Iaccio (2012), 40–47.

tion of Arnold Fanck, Luis Trenker, and Riefenstahl herself. Such an entry by a deity was sufficiently recognizable to the audience even to be used as the model for the appearance of Jupiter in a German film version of *Amphitryon* (1935). Yet, while the carefully choreographed parades of *Triumph of the Will* would form the basis for the depiction of Roman and Fascist forces in later film,¹¹ there is little that is actually borrowed from the ancient world in Riefenstahl's work, except as mediated through the fantasies of modern nationalism. The reveries constructed around the human body and even the Olympic torch relay in *Olympia* correspond less to ancient Greek reality than they do to the notion of Greece invented by the Enlightenment and to more modern romantic notions associated with the likes of Carl Diem.¹²

Feature Films

In neither Italy nor Germany was there any immediate impulse to use feature-length films for propaganda purposes. In Italy, this can be attributed to the almost total decline of the Italian film industry in the 1920s, while in Germany there was concern among the Nazi leaders about the efficacy of trying to spread political messages through fictional cinema. The gradual acceptance of the use of the big screen to dramatize nationalist history in both countries shows some similarities, but also marked differences, between National Socialist and Fascist ideologies.

In Germany, there were no strong links to a Roman past, since the German tribes had notoriously avoided conquest by their southern foe. The German romantic attachment to classical Greece was also of questionable utility for filmmakers, since Athens was the model for the out-dated and decadent gov-

11 See, for instance, the black-cloaked legions at the funeral of Marcus Aurelius in *Fall of the Roman Empire*, and the accession of Commodus in *Gladiator*. Much of the fascist imagery should in fact be associated with Gabriele D'Annunzio and his Fiume legionaries, as well as with the Munich Cosmic Circle formed around Alfred Schuler. Yet, as Tegel (2007, 75) notes, *Triumph of the Will* cannot be a *typical* Nazi film, since it has no parallels except in Riefenstahl's own work.

12 For Riefenstahl's reveries using Greek nude male statuary as the model for modern, Aryan man, and her depiction of the invented ritual of the Olympic torch ceremony, see the contributions by Wildmann and Whyte in this volume. That Riefenstahl's view of how to reproduce Hellenism on screen was more widely shared at the time can be seen from the essays of H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) on "The Cinema and the Classics" in *Close Up* from 1927: Donald, Friedberg, and Marcus (1998), 105–114.

ernmental system known as democracy. The Weimar government was proof of that. Instead, a false connection was made between the German people and the Dorian race, linking the warlike qualities of the German tribes and Sparta. This relationship, frequently remarked upon by Hitler, was still being invoked as late as March 1945, when Carl Diem, the organizer of the Berlin Olympics, addressed thousands of Hitler youth in the Berlin stadium, exhorting them to defend their capital in the spirit of the Spartans.¹³

No German film equivalent of *The 300 Spartans/300* ever seems to have been considered, however. There are various possible reasons for this: German cinema of the 1930s, like its counterparts in Hollywood and Italy, was mainly producing what might be labelled “escapist” entertainment. Attempts to exploit the success of the National Socialists, as through the biographical films *sa Mann Brand*, *Hitlerjunge Quex*, and *Hans Westmar* (all 1933), had some success, despite Goebbels’ initial doubts. But such depictions of the revolutionary stage of the Party’s rise to power were soon seen as out-dated, not to say problematic, after the destruction of the SA in 1934. If historical models were wanted for the trials and triumphs of the new German state, then the exploits of Frederick the Great in films usually starring Otto Gebühr as the monarch (e.g., *Der Choral von Leuthen* [1933], *Fridericus* [1937] and *Der große König* [1942]) or German resistance to Napoleon (as in Veit Harlan’s epic, *Kolberg*, released in 1945) were more suitable. After the Party set up the Filmkreditbank in 1933 and acquired majority ownership of all the major film companies via the Cautio Trust, money was available for approved projects. This included anti-Semitic films such as *Jud Süß* (1940) and *Der ewige Jude* (1940). The latter opens with images of ancient Greek sculpture, followed by images of German cathedrals and the Parthenon with Botticelli’s *Spring* and the Sistine Chapel, linking Greece, Rome, Italy and Germany as Aryan nations through the most famous symbols of their culture. However, there were no films set in the classical world. The life of Arminius might have been attractive for the hero’s victory over Quintilius Varus and his three legions. But the Cheruscan chieftain could also be seen as a symbol of national disunity, given that he was murdered by his fellow tribesmen, who suspected him of seeking monarchic power. Possibly, too, Arminius, known to all through the Hermannsdenkmal at Detmold, was too much associated with the old imperial Germany to be a suitable model for the new populist regime. Moreover, there was competition. For both Hitler and Goebbels, the most successful cinematic depiction of the German past was Fritz Lang’s epic retelling

13 For Diem in 1945, see Laude and Busch (2000), 182–188. On National Socialism and Sparta, see also Roche and Wiedemann in this volume.

of the *Nibelungen* (1924). The film's depiction of destruction and revenge, and of the superiority of the Germanic people over gold-hoarding dwarfs, portrayed with a remarkably Semitic appearance, and over Asiatic Huns, prefigures many Nazi racial themes.¹⁴

A single near-exception exists to this neglect of classical material by German cinema in this period, one that is perhaps rather typical in itself. After *Olympia*, Leni Riefenstahl had begun work on a feature-length project with herself in the role of Penthesilea. This was not the classical myth of the Amazon queen with whom Achilles falls in love at the very moment that he slays her. Rather, Riefenstahl intended to create a cinematic version of Heinrich von Kleist's romantic drama, where Penthesilea is not killed by Achilles, but rather, after a series of duels, kills her lover and then dies herself. The success of Schoeck's operatic version, first performed in Dresden, 1927, may have been a contemporary inspiration. Furthermore, acting in her own films was nothing new to Riefenstahl—she had successfully been both star and director in *Das blaue Licht* (1932). In addition, she could indulge her cinematic fantasies. The Amazonian heroine would be surrounded by athletic young female riders, and consideration was even given to a spectacular production to be filmed in the deserts of Libya, with Italian cooperation. In the end, the outbreak of World War II meant that Riefenstahl could not obtain support for what could have been a remarkable, if egotistical, project, and she had to content herself with the lead role in *Tiefland* (finally released in 1954) instead.

In Italy, the film industry that had flourished prior to the First World War was in steep decline by the mid 1920s, with *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompeii* representing the final gasp of the epic cinema based on classical themes that had made Italian film dominant before the First World War. The 1926 version of the Bulwer-Lytton novel was a remarkably expensive undertaking that meant that Carmine Gallone had to take care of most of the shooting while the ostensible director, Amleto Palmeri, was away in Austria and Berlin raising funds for the project. The finished product displayed the technical advances made in cinema over the previous decade, and even portrayed female nudity, in a bathing scene that would do Cecil B. DeMille proud. However, the future lay with sound, and the staple product of the new Italian cinema was romantic comedies, nicknamed “White Telephone” films. These were particularly associated with the directors Mario Bonnard and Mario Camerini. Both had worked

14 The script is by Lang's then wife, Thea von Harbou, who was later to join the National Socialist Party. On *Nibelungen* and German nationalism in general, see Zironi (2011), 67–80.

abroad: Bonnard with Luis Trenker in Germany, Camerini for Paramount at Joinville in France. In brief, Italian film had become very much representative of an international style associated with Hollywood. Indeed, the major Hollywood companies had offices in Italy, and even made arrangements to release American versions of some Italian films, such as Camerini's comedies starring Vittorio De Sica.¹⁵ Epic film set in antiquity had become a dated style from the silent era.

In addition, Benito Mussolini, who had been a poet and playwright before becoming a politician, does not seem initially to have had a particularly high regard for the new art of photo-dramas. His brief cameo in Samuel Goldwyn's *The Eternal City* (1923) certainly shows his awareness of the power of film as propaganda overseas, but there is no indication that this was ever screened in Italy.¹⁶ *Il Duce* did, however, observe the popular appeal of the figure of Maciste, strongman hero of *Cabiria* (1914) and numerous later films, including *Maciste Alpino* (1917), where the protagonist defeats the Austrian army singlehanded. As played by Bartolemeo Pagano, Maciste¹⁷ was the champion of the weak and helpless, using his immense physical strength for the good of all. Mussolini adopted Pagano's standard pose: head shaven, eyes glaring with arms folded and head thrown back in an unspoken challenge to potential enemies of his people. Like his model, he could play an almost indefinite number of roles: husband, leader, race-car driver, pilot, and soldier, to name but a few.¹⁸

Only in the 1930s did the regime show an obvious interest in its historical portrayal in the cinema. A 1931 competition for a film about the rise of Fascism concluded without any winner. Instead, the task was given to an old friend of Mussolini, Giovacchino Forzano, and resulted in *Camicia nera* ('Black

15 Ricci (2008), 145–155; Celli and Cottino-Jones (2007), 32–34.

16 Muscio (2014). Goldwyn took the 1901 novel, representing the struggle between socialists and reactionary forces, and simply changed the socialists into Fascists and their opponents into Bolsheviks. Mussolini makes a brief appearance in the film, writing a pardon for the protagonist who has killed the dastardly communist Count who was trying to become dictator. Only the last two reels of the film survive, but they are very laudatory of Mussolini: "It was fortunate for Italy that it had a really great and sensible King who received the Liberator and tendered to him the Premiership."

17 The name was an invention of D'Annunzio, who lent his prestige to Pastrone's *Cabiria*, providing inter-titles, and changing the name of the hero from Ercole (Hercules) to what he claimed was an eponym of the god in Sicily. In fact, although *Makistos* ('Strongest') does appear once as an obscure title for Hercules, the version of the name given (perhaps a mistaken formation on the basis of Ercole?) is inexplicable.

18 Hay (1987), 226–232; Ricci (2008), 79–80. On Mussolini and the heroic nude (a most unusual pose for a contemporary politician): Antola (2013), 187–188.

Shirt', 1933). This film was, however, unsuccessful. Much more interesting is Alessandro Blasetti's *Vecchia guardia* (1935), set in an Italian village prior to the march on Rome. Blasetti had already in 1929 made *Sole*, a depiction of life in the swamplands that were to be drained and made habitable by the Fascist government.¹⁹ However, while Blasetti believed in Fascism and its ideas of development and the advancement of the general populace (and indeed *Vecchia guardia* was a box office success in Germany),²⁰ his film was received coolly by the authorities. They wanted a portrait of Italy as self-confident and successfully looking to be involved in world affairs, not a reminder of the revolutionary origins of their Party.²¹

For the reborn Italy, historical themes were thus limited. One choice was the *Risorgimento* that began with Garibaldi and only concluded with Italy's final victory in the First World War—or perhaps even later, with the rise to power of Mussolini supported by the *squadristi* (war veterans) and *Arditi* (shock troops whose attire formed the basis for the Black Shirts). Blasetti made *1860* in 1934, showing the importance of Garibaldi's charisma in unifying the diverse forces of Italy. In 1937, Luis Trenker's *I condottieri: Giovanni dalle Bande Nere* placed the origins of Italian nationalism back in the Renaissance. His film tells the story of a mythical soldier who begins his career as a mercenary but progresses to become a national leader, marching on Rome and receiving the blessing of the Pope for his project of Italian unification. *Condottieri*, with its prefiguration of Mussolini and the Lateran Accords, was successful in both its German and Italian versions, winning first prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1938. Still, Trenker's staunch Catholicism was regarded with suspicion by the Nazi authorities, and his personal Tyrolean nationalism was also problematic.²²

By the mid-1930s, an Italy that was unified and seeking to become an imperial power could thus look back to one model only. That, of course, was Rome and the Roman Empire.²³ In most fields of the arts, this created no difficulties: imperial architecture and modernism could be melded together at EUR, and the reestablishment of control over Libya and the conquest of Abyssinia depicted as a legitimate claim to *Mare nostrum* and a share in European colonialism. In cinema, however, many of the most popular depictions of the Roman world had been of a decadent empire that would be swept away by the rise of Christianity. *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1908 [Maggi], 1913 [Caserini], 1926

19 Hay (1987), 132–138 on *Sole* and “Strapaese” (“ultra-Country”) as an anti-urban ideal.

20 “The only sincerely fascist film made in the period”: Ferrari (2010), 96.

21 Celli and Cottino-Jones (2007), 32.

22 Hull (1969), 196–197.

23 See Painter (2005), and especially Arthurs (2012).

[Gallone/Palermi]), *Quo Vadis* (1913 [Guazzoni], 1925 [D'Annunzio/Jacoby]), and *Ben Hur* (1925 [Niblo]) all fit this pattern. This only left pre-Christian; that is pre-imperial, Republican Rome, as a suitable topic. Yet even here there could be difficulties: *Spartaco*, filmed by Vidali in 1913 from the Risorgimento novel of Giovagnoli, was problematic since it revealed the class conflicts within Italian society, and, while Julius Caesar prefigured Mussolini, his unfortunate end disqualified his life as a subject for film.

The most obvious subject was the wars between Rome and Carthage that had inspired the Greek historian Polybius and his Roman successor, Livy. At least parts of Livy's account would have been familiar to many educated Italians from school Latin classes. In addition, novels set in this period by writers such as Gustave Flaubert (*Salammbô*, 1862) and the enormously popular Emilio Salgari (*Cartagine in fiamme*, 1908) had captured the public imagination. Salgari's novel was the unattributed inspiration for *Cabiria*, the undisputed masterpiece of pre-war cinema, and the last truly internationally successful Italian film. In addition, *Cabiria* was strongly associated with Gabriele D'Annunzio, poet and futurist, who was also one of the inspirations for and a supporter of the early Fascist Party. A sonORIZED version of the film with additional footage²⁴ had been successfully released in 1931, so a remake was clearly in order. Just as the Italian state controlled sports through the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* and sought to install Roman military values in the youth by the health camps run by the *Opera Nazionale di Balilla*,²⁵ by investing in this project, it would not merely guide but actively intervene in Italians' leisure viewing. While the Banca del Lavoro would normally subsidize up to 60% of the cost of Italian films, in this case, it would provide all the funding on artistic and ideological grounds. Officially, the subvention was 12,400,000 lire, nearly a fifth of all available film subsidies (Trenker's *Condottieri* was given similar support). In addition, all the branches of the Italian armed forces provided assistance, as specifically acknowledged in the opening credits of the finished film. The Italian air force helped out with aerial shots, the navy provided assistance with scenes of the Roman fleet, and up to 5,000 soldiers at a time participated as extras in the battles.

Rather than concentrate on the perils of the child Cabiria and her final rescue by the Roman hero, Fulvius Axilla, and his loyal servant, Maciste, set against

24 The differentiation of the 1914 version from later prints, based partly on careful examination of film stocks, only occurred with the Italian National Cinema Museum restoration of *Cabiria* in 2006.

25 On the Fascist agenda of the health camps and the use of modernism to underpin violent imperialism, see Winkelman (2010).

the historical background of the Second Punic War, it was decided to concentrate on the clash of wills between Scipio Africanus and Hannibal as the representatives of their races. This “great man” treatment of the Second Punic War can be traced back to Polybius, the reluctant guest of the Scipio family when held as a hostage in Rome, but was given its canonical form in the Third Decade of Livy’s history. As the title, *Scipione l’Africano*, suggests, the emphasis of the 1937 film is on the Roman general, leaving little room for a romantic heroine. A doomed non-noble Roman woman, Velia, and her lover, Arrunte (Arruns), are instead introduced so that both leaders can be seen through the eyes of the common people. National destiny overshadows individuals and is firmly linked to the character of each race’s leader: Scipio’s successful invasion of Africa will prove the superiority of the Roman race over the decadent Carthaginians. The tension of a fluctuating struggle between two evenly-balanced contestants seen in Livy is thus replaced by a clear demonstration of the power available to a nation acting in harmony with its leader.

However the project was originally conceived, the director Carmine Gallone was to take responsibility for its production. Apart from directorial duties, Gallone is also listed as one of a group of three who produced the story and subsequent screenplay (the others are Camillo Mariani dell’Aguillara and Sebastiano Luciani, neither of whom had previous scriptwriting credits). Critics sometimes express surprise that a director who was chiefly renowned for producing fictional accounts of the lives of composers and singers and Neapolitan musicals should have been entrusted with such a major undertaking.²⁶ This is to overlook Gallone’s *La cavalcata ardente* (1925), a Risorgimento melodrama that linked Garibaldi’s Red Shirts with contemporary Black Shirts. Furthermore, he had considerable experience working internationally in England and France, and particularly on German co-productions, in which he displayed his ability to work with large casts. And his work was popular with audiences both in Italy and internationally—for instance, *Casta Diva*, a fictionalized account of the life of Bellini and his composition of *Norma*, had won the prize for Best Italian Film in the 1935 Venice Film Festival, and would soon be released in

26 Gallone’s *Das Land ohne Frauen* (1929) was the first German sound film, but real success only came with *Die singende Stadt* (1931), released in alternative versions as *La città canora*/*La Ville qui chante*/*Farewell to Love*. The incorporation of Neapolitan melodies and aerial shots of the Bay of Naples foreshadowed the international appeal of popular Italian song, as epitomized in the films of Beniamino Gigli. Some of this character can be seen in a scene at Scipio’s camp shortly before Zama (cut from the English version) where soldiers, individually and in chorus, sing of their exploits. For Gallone’s life and career, see Iaccio (2003b).

an English-language version.²⁷ In brief, Gallone appeared to be a safe choice for a film that would both showcase Italian economic growth under Fascism to the world, and reveal that its film industry was capable of competing with and surpassing the productions of Hollywood in terms of technique and scale. Gallone's conclusion to an exchange of letters with Luigi Freddi, who expresses concern about the film's slow progress, shows his ability to handle the political pressure adroitly. "In all my career I have never been interested in what people say. 'I have always marched on.' [A well-known saying of Mussolini.] *Il Duce* said, 'Scipio will be a success.' And I'm sure that *Il Duce* was not wrong."²⁸

The film opens with screen credits in Roman capital letters set against a backdrop of Roman soldiers fighting barbarians (actually scenes from the column of Marcus Aurelius), which are then replaced by a Roman-style inscription, written in Italian.²⁹ As the camera scrolls down, it reveals the story of the life-and-death struggle between Rome and Carthage, concluding with Hannibal's invasion of Italy in 218 B.C. Rome's armies had suffered a series of defeats, culminating on August 2, 216, with the massacre of 50,000 soldiers on the plain of Cannae. The inscription is now replaced by a tableau of the scene after the battle, where a Roman standard is slowly raised above the corpses and a cry is heard, echoed by the chorus on the soundtrack, "Vendiciamo Canne!" ("We will avenge Cannae").

This prologue sets the tone for the rest of the film. Voiceless, except for a soundtrack that features a rallying trumpet-call and insistent chorus, with black screens separating each section, it announces *Scipione's* direct descent from the silent movie tradition. At the same time, the emphasis on taking revenge for Zama is designed to appeal to a contemporary audience. The

27 The political adaptability of the director can be seen by his production in 1946 of the story of an operatic company in the Italian resistance, *Avanti a lui tremava tutta Roma*. The result is a mixture of *Tosca* and *Roma, città aperta* (and so starring the tenor, Tito Gobbi, and Mamma Roma herself, Anna Magnani).

28 Gallone to Luigi Freddi, Sabaudia, 28 January 1937, quoted in Gregor (1969), 42. Freddi suggests that the shooting schedule lasted 232 days, a remarkably long time for films of the period.

29 The most readily-available copy of the film is *Scipio Africanus* (actually entitled *The Defeat of Hannibal* in this 1960s Walter Manley Enterprises television version, with an English soundtrack provided by American Dubbing Corporation, Rome), released on DVD by International Historic Films. This has a runtime of 85 minutes. A copy of the Italian version with Russian voiceover, taken from a VHS tape, has been posted to YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3vR-DQOnug; accessed 23 July, 2017). This runs for 108 minutes. Comparison indicates that the English dub makes numerous brief cuts and reduces the film score, substantially damaging the rhythm and impact of the original.

obvious parallel, as Italian school children could see,³⁰ was the call to avenge Italy's ignominious defeat at Aduwa in 1896. The Abyssinian War of 1935–1936 was a revanchist response that removed this stain on the national honor, while announcing Italian claims to an imperial empire on the model of France and Great Britain.

The main narrative of the film starts with a scene set in the Roman forum in 205 B.C. Senators, including Fabius Maximus and (anachronistically) Cato the Elder, file into the Senate while discussing Scipio's wish to invade Africa. Cato points out that such a decision does not lie with the consul, but with the Senate alone, and its members are generally hostile to foreign adventures. This attitude recalls the way in which the parliamentary socialists had once opposed Mussolini's call for Italy's entry into World War One. Then the camera turns to various members of the Roman crowd, many being veterans of Scipio's campaigns, who enthusiastically support their general's plans. Finally, the consul himself descends from the Capitoline hill to the universal applause of the onlookers, all greeting him with the Fascist salute. Preceded by lictors carrying the fasces of his office, Scipio processes through the Forum into the Senate.

The technical effort put into this recreation of Rome is truly impressive. The temples in the Forum Romanum were built up to 45 meters tall, and the Capitoline and Tarpeian Rock reconstructions required more than 20,000 square meters of walls.³¹ Yet, for all that the scene befits a *kolossal*, this is Rome as imagined under Fascism, whose temples dwarf the populace beneath in the fashion of the buildings soon to be constructed in EUR, not the comparatively modest efforts that would have existed in the Forum in the third century BC.³²

When the scene turns to a discussion inside the Senate, recreating the famous debate in Livy (28.40–45) between the youthful Scipio and the aged Fabius Maximus,³³ a particular feature of Gallone's film is revealed. Annibale

30 See essays in *Bianco e nero*, August 1939.

31 Produzione Consorzio 'Scipione l'Africano'/ENIC (Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche)/LUCE pamphlet in English and Italian from 1937, as described in Iaccio (2003c), 54–55.

32 The set design was the work of Pietro Aschieri, a major architect of the Fascist period who also designed the Museo della civiltà romana at EUR—see Marcello, ch. 13 in this volume. Another indication of the importance of the project is that the musical score was composed by Ildebrando Pizzetti, whose *Sinfonia del fuoco* had been performed at the opening of *Cabiria* in Turin (8 April 1914). Cinematography was entrusted to Anchise Brizzi, whose numerous credits up until that time included Blasetti's *1860* (1934) and Gianini's *Lo squadrone bianco* (1936).

33 The emphasis on a new generation of Romans in Livy fits easily with the typical fascist

Ninchi, who plays Scipio, was a well-respected actor, specializing in Greek tragedy, but his classical cadences and physical immobility were better suited to the stage, and contrast starkly with the more animated performances of other members of the cast. It may well have been a deliberate artistic decision to place the hero above the hustle and bustle of everyday Rome, but Luigi Freddi was later to blame Ninchi for the film's lack of success. Perhaps, as Iaccio suggests, Scipio in Gallone's film is too Republican and insufficiently imperial to be the desired reflection of Benito Mussolini.³⁴ In the final analysis, it is best to view Ninchi's performance and his character's moral rectitude as typical of melodrama, but dated at a time when cinematic characters were coming to reflect the speech patterns and even lifestyles of their audience.³⁵

While Scipio is finally granted the province of Sicily, many of the senators remain bitterly opposed to an African campaign, and refuse to grant any funds to the consul for mobilizing an army. The solution is shown when Scipio once again traverses the forum: all citizens of Italy offer themselves up as soldiers or sailors.³⁶ In the next scene, Scipio's wife is shown offering her jewellery to the cause, while also acting as a dutiful wife when she presents her baby to her husband before he leaves.³⁷ The political resonances are clear: while the Liberal government was reluctant to join in World War One, in 1915 Mussolini used public opinion to force Italy's entry on the side of the western allies; then, in 1922, when the democratic government was unable to deal with competing armed groups (socialists and Fascists), Mussolini imposed order by having his followers throughout Italy march on Rome and ensure that he was invited to become Prime Minister. The donation of jewellery by noble women recalls the

tenet "to replace gerontocracy, mediocrity and national weakness with youth, heroism and national greatness": Griffin (1991), 39.

34 Iaccio (2003c), 74.

35 The success of De Sica in Camerini's white telephone comedies partially lies in the fact that his role is often that of a lower-class Italian pretending to be part of high society, a character with whom the audience can identify both because of his actual status and his aspirations for a better life.

36 The support from all over Italy shows the diverse inhabitants of the peninsula accepting Roman political dominance, a treatment of the past that was very much in line with the racial and imperial policies of the Fascist period: De Francesco (2013), 181–215.

37 The scene is modeled on the famous encounter of Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6.466–473. But while in Homer Hector's helmet frightens the infant Astyanax, in *Scipione* the baby smiles and tugs at the horsehair plume on his father's helmet, and then an older son picks it up and plays at being a soldier.

way Italian women donated their wedding rings in the “Gold for the Fatherland” campaign of 1935.³⁸

In contrast to the sunlit scenes associated with Scipio, the film then turns to the Carthaginian camp at night, an episode that is cut in the English-language version. A mutiny is brewing among the mercenary troops, but when Hannibal discovers this, he isolates the mutineers and has them massacred. He then calmly returns to listen to news about Scipio’s plans. The Carthaginian general is depicted as the negative counterpart of Scipio, a man of cruelty commanding forces that are only interested in their own pleasures and monetary gain. That impression is strengthened by the subsequent raid on the house of Velia, as Carthaginian troops beat the old, manhandle women, and drink until intoxicated. Yet Hannibal also admires the Roman spirit, viewing Scipio as his counterpart for daring to invade the land of his enemy, and respecting the courage of Velia to the point of taking her as his concubine. When Velia describes him as, according to her mistress, “an ogre who devours children”, Hannibal offers to take her to Carthage “to feed our gods who devour children”. Few would have caught the allusion to Juvenal’s description of Hannibal’s future role as bogeyman, but many theatergoers would have recognized the reference to the cult of Baal, to whom little Cabiria was nearly sacrificed. Hannibal is unable to restrain his appetites: he is shown feasting alone in his tent and separates Velia from her lover, contrary to Scipio’s action in Spain in returning a captured Spanish bride to her fiancé. Still, after sixteen years, Italy has become homeland to Hannibal: “A man’s country is the land for which he takes chances, fights for and battles for and he loves it. If a man’s country is where he has placed all his ambitions, why then the land itself is reason for living. And if it’s the land that can make you suffer, and to abandon it is to die, then my beloved country is Italy.” While the Carthaginian soldiers cannot be truly Italian because they do not possess wives and children, because they plunder rather than plant and sow, they cannot but respond to the land itself, the very origin of the nationalist spirit.³⁹

Within the Roman camp, there are shirkers in the arms factories,⁴⁰ but even they are carried away by the renewed fighting spirit inspired by their leader.

38 The *giornata della fede* (18 December 1935) was portrayed as a response to League of Nations sanctions, and gained the support of Luigi Pirandello, who donated his Nobel Prize for Literature medal to the cause.

39 The portrayal of Velia and Scipio’s domestic circumstances should both be read in terms of the Fascist support for family endangered by the rise of the “new woman” personified in the film by Sophonisba. See also Arthurs in this volume.

40 Another scene cut from the English language version, perhaps thinking that the allusion to the post-Great War factory strikes in Italy would not be understood elsewhere.

Furthermore, unlike the Carthaginians, the Romans are pious. Scipio invokes the gods at a parade of his invasion forces, presenting the place of honor to the one standard rescued from Cannae, and offers due prayers to the Roman divinities before his fleet casts off for Africa. While Hannibal may recount to his intimate Maharbal the oath he took as a child to hate Rome eternally, Scipio announces before soldiers and civilians alike⁴¹ that he is undertaking a civic mission to avenge Rome's greatest defeat. Thus Hannibal is driven by personal demons, but Scipio encompasses the spiritual values of an entire people. If the invocation of pagan deities in Gallone's film was of some concern for the Catholic authorities,⁴² the departure scene reflects the close alliance of Church and state in post-Lateran Accords Italy. For instance, some bishops of the Church had blessed the Italian soldiers as they left on the Abyssinian expedition.⁴³ Italy's duty was not merely to conquer barbarians, but to spread the nation's values in pagan lands as well.⁴⁴

As the action moves to North Africa, the exoticism of Carthage is shown in the Assyro-Babylonian decorations around its marketplace and within its Council. The Carthaginian nobles are no more united than the Roman senate, but Hasdrubal insists on continuing the war with the assistance of Syphax, who has been lured into changing his allegiance by marriage to Hasdrubal's daughter, Sophonisba. The ill-starred love life of the Carthaginian princess had been a favorite topic since Livy, and had featured prominently in *Cabiria*. In Pastrone's film, Italia Almirante-Mazzini portrayed a femme fatale who suffers mainly from the acts of others (she is forced to marry Syphax, despite her love for Masinissa, and in her death scene reveals that Cabiria is still alive under her protection). In *Scipione*, Francesca Bragiotti is a screen vamp instead, her eyes lit to suggest her mesmerizing power over men.⁴⁵ If a Roman woman such as

41 Such a military parade before a civilian audience is typical of the theatrical presentation of military power in Mussolini's Italy rather than the ancient world. The competition among the civilian onlookers to participate in the campaign, if only by carrying the Cannae standard to the port of departure, is also a clearly modern invention.

42 The Centro Cattolico Cinematografico (CCC) gave *Scipione* an advisory rating as "need[ing] some touches in order to eliminate a few scenes with too much of a heathen flavor".

43 Koon (1985), 235.

44 This, of course, echoes the classic imperial statement of Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.851–853: "Roman, remember to rule over other peoples (this will be your skill), to turn peace into a habit, to spare the defeated and battle the intransigent to the end." See also more generally Nelis' chapter in this volume.

45 Wyke (2002).

Velia is motivated by love for her partner (a theme indicated by an initial scene where Velia and Arruns present doves to a statue of Venus), her Carthaginian counterpart acts out of hatred for the Roman people.⁴⁶ As a result, she is both infertile and destructive to those around her—and to herself as well.

After Scipio's success against the combined Carthaginian-Numidian armies, the Carthaginian council sends envoys to negotiate for peace, while at the same time calling on Hannibal to return to Africa. The desire for peace and a return to the Carthaginians' main business of trade indicates a people whose decadent materialism will be no match for their idealistic, but also disciplined, rivals. It might at first appear that this characterization is racist, even anti-Semitic. Yet there was no Italian equivalent of German anti-Jewish cinema, and a contemporary German reaction to the film was to associate the *Händler-volk* of Carthage with the decadent British race of shopkeepers.⁴⁷ This suggestion of "perfidious Albion" is continued when the Carthaginians reject Roman demands for compensation for attacks on their supply ships during a truce and abuse their envoys, relying on Hannibal to protect them.

The stage is now set for the final battle, but first, Hannibal requests a personal encounter with Scipio. The meeting of the two gives the two great generals an opportunity to duel with words. Hannibal, who arrives on a black charger, dismounts and addresses the Roman commander, who has ridden up on a white stallion. He reveals himself as a man of the past when he recalls his battles with Scipio's father, and then suggests that Carthage would be willing to give up its overseas possessions and confine its interests to Africa if granted peace. Scipio, in reply, points out that Rome already controls the territories offered and, recalling previous Carthaginian perfidy, demands compensation for recent injuries as well.

The battle of Zama is thus inevitable, and is shown in a twenty-minute sequence that more than emphasizes its position as the turning point in Rome's history.⁴⁸ It cannot be an accident that the battle was filmed at Sabaudia, a

46 She refuses any suggestion of a peace with Rome after Roman envoys bring such an offer to Syphax (cut in the English language version; the following dream sequence where she foresees the burning of the camps, her marriage to Masinissa, and the victory of Rome, is also excised).

47 "Karthagos Fall—Roms Kampf ums Mittelmeer", *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* nr. 2837, Berlin n.d. (*Scipione* was released as *Karthagos Fall* in Germany). At the time of the Abyssinian invasion, Great Britain had reinforced its navy in the Mediterranean, while Marshall Badoglio, Italian governor of Libya, planned an invasion of Egypt. For the nineteenth-century association of the Britons with the Phoenicians: Champion (2001).

48 The main excision in the English version is Scipio's explanation of his plan to create

new Fascist city built on the coast south of Rome after the draining of the swamps and the elimination of malaria in the 1920s. In addition to the use of thousands of soldiers as extras, and elephants hired from circuses all over Europe, students from the university Fascist clubs (*Gruppi universitari fascisti*) were encouraged to make their own films of the battle.⁴⁹ And when Scipio in his eve-of-battle speech exhorts his troops to gain glory in Rome and throughout the world by its victories in Africa, the general is viewed between the fasces held by his bodyguards. Urging his men to seek “Glory or death!”, he responds to Hannibal’s reminder of his troops of their greatest victory with the cry: “Vendicate Canne” (“Avenge Cannae”). And, after elephant charges,⁵⁰ cavalry battles, and the clash of infantry (some scenes of which seem modelled on those shown on the Aurelian column), the standard rescued from Cannae, now reduced in the fighting to its eagle alone, is held high: “Cannae is avenged. Hannibal is defeated.”

The consequences are shown in two scenes: one of Hannibal riding alone in defeat as darkness falls, the other at Rome, where news of victory leads to a torchlight celebration in the Forum. Still, victory in war is not enough by itself. In the final scene, the flames of the torches dissolve into wheat cascading through the hands of Scipio, who has now returned to his villa: “The grain is good. And tomorrow, with the aid of the gods, we will start to sow.” He then slowly walks away, accompanied by his wife and children.⁵¹ If the countryside is the unspoilt heart of the nation, represented by family and bountiful harvest in Fascist ideology, then the clear message is that the African expedition has provided a solution to Italy’s rural poverty, as well as restoring national pride.

The contemporary reception of *Scipione* is hard to gauge. It won the Prize for Best Italian Film at the Venice Festival, and was warmly received by the

passages among his troops for the Carthaginian elephants to charge through harmlessly, a scene that makes his battle tactics comprehensible.

49 “Cinema gira,” *Cinema* 9, 10 November 1936. Ricci (2008, 103–104) notes that Gallone films the battle as though the viewer was a spectator to the event, rather than identifying as a fictive participant in the style of Eisenstein or DeMille. This both follows the theatrical style of Italian epic (the audience views the staging from a distance) and reinforces the suggestion that strength lies in united action, not individual heroism. Only Velia’s concern for the outcome of the battle, since she is left behind in the Carthaginian camp and cannot see its progress, imparts some tension into the proceedings.

50 Suggestions of animal cruelty are likely to be urban myths: the elephants used were trained animals, performing circus tricks such as picking up men in their trunks and falling over and playing dead.

51 At the time of the film’s release, school children chose this as the scene which made the greatest impression on them: Guerra (2010), 58.

Fascist hierarchy. The Italian press, tightly controlled by the regime, was universally positive: "... an Italian work that with its colossal, spectacular pomp can give the Americans food for thought (but they will never be in a position to reproduce the value and poetry of history)".⁵² Luigi Freddi claimed that the film recouped its cost in the Italian and international markets.⁵³ German press reactions were positive, but nowhere does it appear that the film attracted greater than normal attendance. In short, it was a film for a specific historical moment, and Roman history was not in itself a theme that would draw a mass audience.⁵⁴ Evidently for some, such as Gallone, it became something to excuse or forget.⁵⁵ Ellery Stone, the American admiral who headed the Allied Control Commission after Liberation, could dismiss Italian cinema as the economic creation of the Fascist regime, and suggested that Hollywood could provide for Italy's entertainment needs.⁵⁶ Yet *Scipione* may well have succeeded in its aim of drawing the attention of the American studios: Hollywood productions in Italy such as *Quo Vadis* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1951, filmed at Cinecittà), *Ulysses* (1954, directed by Camerini with Kirk Douglas in the lead role), and *Helen of Troy* (Robert Wise, 1956) were to pave the way for the unexpected triumph of the Italian peplum films between 1959 and 1965.

Scipione is indisputably a Fascist-era film: the end credits advertise that it had won the Mussolini Cup for Best Italian Film at Venice, ANNO XV (the fifteenth year of the Fascist Era, i.e. 1937), and the comparisons between Republican Rome and Fascist Italy are numerous and deliberate. Still, imperialist themes and the clash of cultures were already embedded in Livy's account two thousand years earlier. At heart, *Scipione l'Africano* is a historical melodrama, a story type well known in theater and opera long before the invention of cinema. Herein also lies its weakness: any narrative of the deeds of famous men is naturally didactic, a concern that is often avoided by focussing on fictional

52 "Spectatore: Verso un grande film italiano," *Cinema* 4, 25 August 1936. For an unflattering view of film criticism during the *ventennio nero*, see Tadini (1954).

53 Freddi (1949), 1,328.

54 The publicity campaign that accompanied *Scipione* indicates a desire to educate the public (by pamphlets, competitions, and even a novelization by scriptwriter Mariani Dell'Anguillara that made the connections with Mussolini explicit), as well as creating commercial "tie-ins" such as beauty products and barbers' calendars: Iaccio (2003c), 65–70.

55 Gallone was one of only three Italian directors to be given a six-month ban from the film industry after the war (probably for trying to revive Cinecittà, rather than as a punishment for his earlier work): Steimatsky (2009), 32–33.

56 Quaglietti (1980), 37–38, with the comments of Steimatsky (2009), 34 n. 20.

characters as observers of great events. So, within *Cabiria*, the lead character and her rescuers are accidental participants in the Second Punic War. Scipio, however, is the representative of his nation, as Hannibal is the representative of his, and psychological exploration is irrelevant when the hero's goal (successfully achieved) is the redemption of Roman honor. The film thus becomes a cinematic equivalent of the Aurelian Column that introduces its credits: apparently representing movement, but in reality permanently static. To this degree, it fits with the Fascist revival of interest in imperial Roman art and architecture. In 1937, the new Roman empire could bask in its imperial successes, but the military might of Mussolini's Italy would soon be shown to be a fantasy.⁵⁷

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PART 3

Places



Classical Archaeology in Nazi Germany

Stefan Altekamp

Introduction

The summer of 1945 in central Europe is remembered as being one of the finest of the twentieth century. Under the conciliatory sun, civil life in Germany took its first steps towards recovery from the disastrous effects of the Second World War, which had ultimately visited destruction upon those responsible both for its outbreak and for its gargantuan dimensions. In a state of general emergency, the German public was absorbed by the necessity of attending to its most basic needs, and started to turn its back on the horrific events which had just passed. Amnesia was prevalent for obvious reasons: the burdens and stresses of daily survival; fear of being accused and punished, or shame at the question: How could this happen? What did *we* do?

Following this act of psychological repression, post-war German society did witness a slow but steady process of re-appropriating its grim recent past. Debating Nazism evolved as a persistent *leitmotif* of public discourse. Yet initial repression had caused oblivion, and that which is silenced is eventually forgotten. Increasingly, re-appropriation had to be based on documents instead of on living memory, and a more abstract, but by now very complex picture emerged. Thus, simultaneously, we now know both less and more than did those who personally experienced that exceptionally beautiful summer of 1945.

During that summer, Martin Schede, president of the German Archaeological Institute, sat at his desk in his private villa, composing memoranda on the institute's past and its possible future. Schede vigorously defended the institute's role in promoting research and fostering international cooperation. Only recently, during the Third Reich, the institute had been exposed to political pressures.¹ Schede's argument reenacted the general repression—in this case within the context of a scholarly discipline—and thus contributed in its own right to the structural amnesia which was prevalent at large.

Still, even in Classical Archaeology, the sub-discipline which dominated the German Archaeological Institute, a (belated) accounting for its history during

1 Memorandum dated 13 August 1945: Vignier (2012a), 105–106.

the Third Reich gathered pace. Nevertheless, as late as the 1970s, the first serious studies on Prehistory or Ancient History and Nazism still nourished the misleading impression that Classical Archaeology had performed a fundamentally different function under National Socialism, and therefore had no need for critical re-investigation.² It was Alain Schnapp who insisted in 1981 that Classical Archaeology should be included when talking about the role of archaeology during the Nazi period.³

In Germany, individual archaeologists who had suffered persecution in the 1930s were occasionally remembered in the 1980s.⁴ In general, however, the 1980s provided bewildering evidence of a hagiographic whitewash of the role of Classical Archaeology during this period, epitomized in an official biographical handbook published in 1988.⁵ During the same year, those attending the Thirteenth International Congress of Classical Archaeology in Berlin were offered an unrevised copy of Gerhart Rodenwaldts "Kunst um Augustus" from 1943.⁶ Two years before, on Rodenwaldt's hundredth anniversary (1886–1945), the former head of the Department of Classical Archaeology at Berlin University had been celebrated by both affiliated institutes in West- and East-Berlin. Rodenwaldt's two successors, a "communist" at the Humboldt Universität, and a "bourgeois" at the Freie Universität, competed in depicting their common predecessor as a defender of sincere scholarship against the impertinence of Nazism.⁷

Throughout the 1980s, and even at the beginning of the 1990s, the disciplinary mainstream continued to cherish the understanding that (1) Classical Archaeology during the Nazi period did not produce anything novel, in contrast with the intellectually creative 1920s, (2) that it did not participate seriously in anything affirmative with respect to Nazi ideology, (3) that it differed from Prehistory and Ancient History in keeping its distance from the regime, and (4) that it was subjected to a constant threat of being oppressed by the cult of the "Aryans".⁸ Four assumptions, four legends. Alternatively, the period in question was omitted from historical overviews as irrelevant.⁹ In the German

2 Bollmus (1970/2009); Kater (1970/2006); Losemann (1977).

3 Schnapp (1981).

4 Buchholz (1982) on Margarete Bieber; Fuchs (1984) on Karl Lehmann-Hartleben.

5 Lullies and Schiering (1988);—outstanding in this anthology: Fuchs (1988).

6 Rodenwaldt (1943/1988). For more on Rodenwaldt and his essay, see below.

7 Schindler (1986a), 629; Schindler (1986b), 636; Borbein (1987b), 698.

8 Borbein (1987a), 107; Junker (1997); cf. Wiedemann in this volume.

9 Andreae (1993), 29–32; Hölscher (1995), 207; Isler (1995), 6–10.

Democratic Republic, Nazism's possible afterlife in East German universities remained a non-topic.¹⁰

However, in recent years, this situation has changed—sporadically during the 1990s, and consistently since the turn of the millennium—and so the present survey is able to build on a series of critical in-depth studies.¹¹ At present, apologists for the discipline find themselves taking an increasingly defensive stance.¹²

The Scholarly Community

Academia was the professional home of Classical Archaeology in Germany; in 1933, the subject was taught at twenty-three German universities, including the recently-founded universities of Frankfurt (1914), Cologne (1919) and Hamburg (1919).¹³ This situation remained stable until 1945—remarkably so, given two general contrary trends: a considerable expansion of professorial posts from 1920 to 1931, and a marked contraction between 1931 and 1938. Fourteen out of twenty-two full-time professors teaching in 1932 were still in post in 1938. Five had retired in the normal way of things or died; three had been dispensed with on racist grounds.

The resulting proportion of politically-motivated changes increases slightly from fourteen to eighteen per cent, if we include one professor in Bonn who was forced to cease teaching in 1940, but remained a member of his faculty. Still, Classical Archaeology was less affected by changes in personnel during the Nazi period than the average university department, where approximately a fifth of posts changed hands. By 1933, classical philology had already reached a rate of twenty-four per cent, ancient history around twenty-two per cent.¹⁴ Within the German Archaeological Institute, two out of six heads of department were deprived of office on racist grounds.

10 *Silentium* on Robert Heidenreich: Kluwe (1985), 18; Heres (1991)—cf. Altekamp (2008a), 193–194.

11 Binder (1991b); Faber (1995); Marchand (1996); Manderscheid (2000); Bichler (2001); Maischberger (2002); Sünderhauf (2004); Fröhlich (2007); Altekamp (2008a); Sünderhauf (2008); Diebner (2009); Jansen (2010); Manderscheid (2010); Vigener (2012a); Brands (2012); Brands and Maischberger (2012); Chapoutot (2012); Altekamp (2016).

12 Junker (2003).

13 Schiering (1969), 160–161; Altekamp (2008a), 191–192, 198–199.

14 Eisler (1969); Marchand (1996), 345; Grüttner and Kinas (2007).

The majority of the academic elite also survived the upheavals of 1945: fifteen full-time positions remained unaffected. Three university professors lost their lives in the final days of the war, while two German universities (Breslau and Königsberg) did not survive as such. While Ernst Buschor (Munich) and Hans Möbius (Würzburg) were temporarily suspended from office, Willy Zschietzschmann (Gießen) was ousted permanently. In terms of staffing in Classical Archaeology, there was little difference between the practice employed in the western and in the Soviet occupation zones. Three classical archaeologists whose records were not uncompromised served as university rectors in the early post-war period: Bernhard Schweitzer (Leipzig, 1945), Friedrich Matz (Marburg, 1946/47) and Reinhard Herbig (Heidelberg, 1954/55).¹⁵ None of the discipline's emigrants returned to a German university. Again, the German Archaeological Institute experienced a more marked discontinuity in its upper echelons: the president was detained, one head of department and one deputy dismissed. Meanwhile, one former head of department returned from exile to take up his former position.

Particularly at university level, Classical Archaeology in Germany has been characterized by the coherence and continuity afforded by a very small scholarly community endowed with strong inter- and transgenerational bonds of loyalty. During the course of the twentieth century, three outstanding teachers—Georg Loeschcke (Bonn 1899–1912, Berlin 1912–1915), Franz Studniczka (Leipzig 1896–1926) and Ernst Buschor (Munich 1929–1946, 1947–1954)—dominated three successive generations of academics. In the 1960s, more than fifty per cent of the relevant chairs in both Germanies were held by former students of Buschor, who had mainly been trained in the 1930s.¹⁶

Considering that political caesuras had little impact on the discipline, generational changes deserve closer attention when enquiring into possible dynamics in archaeological research agendas during the Nazi period. For this purpose, the age profiles of thirty-three leading positions will be considered. This overview includes twenty-eight university chairs, once Graz, Innsbruck, Prague and Vienna had become German universities between 1938/39 and 1945, and Strasbourg was endowed with the title of “Reichsuniversität” between 1941 and 1944 (with two professors of Classical Archaeology). The list is completed by four top positions within the German Archaeological Institute: the president, the heads of department in Athens and Rome and—because of his exception-

15 Brands (2012), 32 n. 261.

16 Zanker (1986), 16.

ally strong position—the deputy-head in Rome. Ten of these leading figures were born in the 1890s, and nine between 1900 and 1909. The remaining fourteen were born before 1890. Thus, for a clear majority, the Nazi period marked an early phase, or, at most, the zenith of their professional career. At this stage, the youthful elite would still have been eager to leave its stamp on changing paradigms, or at least have been receptive to evolving trends in research. The existence of this age-pattern strongly suggests the value of investigating the possible influence of dominant ideologies on archaeological practice (see below).

“Followers of National Socialism”

This study seeks to avoid both apologetic and moralizing qualifications, eschewing descriptions such as “guilty”, “entangled”, or imprecise definitions—such as “followers” or “adversaries” of National Socialism. Instead, focus will be placed on affinity—or otherwise—with core elements of Nazi ideology, an ideology which since 1933 had led from the radicalism of words to a corresponding radicalism of action. Its core consisted of an authoritarian, social Darwinist, racist and bellicose conception of history and society.¹⁷ Varying degrees of consensus can be treated as representing levels of ideological escalation.¹⁸ The sequence of these ideological levels is not a strict one, and individual aspects can overlap:

- 1) Ethnocentrism: Ethnic communities are the prime actors in history.
- 2) Essentialism: Ethnic communities differ in essence (i.e., biologically) from each other, and in this sense are called “races”.
- 3) Actualism: Biologically defined “races” are stable entities, bridging the gap between past and present. A racially defined “self” in the present therefore has an equivalent in the past (e.g., Germans and “Germani”).
- 4) Emotionalization: Loyalty towards one’s “race” in the present coincides with an emotionalized relationship to historic “races”, as these are equated with modern population groups.
- 5) Bellicism or: history as struggle: “Races” not only differ from each other in an essentialist way; they coexist in existential antagonism.

¹⁷ Bialas (2014).

¹⁸ For analogous models, see Wiggershaus-Müller (1998); Kaschuba (2003), 73; Mommsen (2014).—On the increasing radicalization of concepts of “Aryanism”, see Wiedemann, this volume.

- 6) Death-wish: Racial superiority does not guarantee survival. Failure of the best stock is always a historical option. Heroic downfall is a *leitmotif* of the Nazi worldview, and was translated into active self-destruction at the end of World War II.
- 7) Autoimmunization of racist historiography: Understanding the “racial principle” reigning in world history is a special analytical capacity peculiar to representatives of certain “races” alone.
- 8) Ultimate radicalization: “Races” are by nature characterized by “superior” or “inferior” qualities. Ultimately, this hierarchy confers a stronger or weaker right to exist, and therefore presents a justification for racially-motivated murder.

The archaeological equivalent of the concept of “peoples” or “races” were “archaeological cultures”, primarily visible as “Sachkulturen” (geographically and chronologically coherent clusters within material culture). Since the nineteenth century, the establishment of “archaeological cultures” as equivalents of prehistoric “peoples” became routine in archaeological research. At the outset, this had little to do with Nazi racial ideology, but would come to seem highly compatible with it in due course. A crucial radicalization was introduced by the conceptual confluence of “archaeological cultures” with essentialist “races”. Those who used archaeological evidence to construct “races” and to claim their “superior” or “inferior” collective qualities on the basis of this evidence were acting in strong conformity with Nazi ideology.

Holding a political position such as nationalism or anti-liberalism proved to be a necessary, but barely sufficient, condition for accepting the core ideology of Nazism. Alongside these positions, revolutionary social romanticism—not uncommon among classicists of the earlier twentieth century—could lead to sympathies for extremely Nazified positions.

Persecution and Exile

From the very first weeks of the Nazi regime, its opponents were relentlessly persecuted.¹⁹ A systematic attack was launched against those whom the regime

19 General aspects: Strauss, Buddensieg and Düwell (1987); Schottlaender (1988); Voigt (1989); Heiber (1991); Heiber (1992/94); Grüttner and Kinas (2007); Kinas (2011); Happ (2012), 135.—Classical Archaeology: Wegeler (1996), 390–393; Dyson (1998), 223–228; Altekamp (2008a), 202–207; Manderscheid (2010), 47–49; Brands (2012), 24–32; Vigener (2012a), 74–76, 116–120.

regarded as its enemies on racist grounds. Between 1933 and 1945, nearly 2,000 laws or decrees were issued against “Non-Aryans”—mainly “Jews”.²⁰ Even before this legal discrimination became life-threatening, it destroyed its victims’ professional existence. Civil servants, including academics, were an early target group. Eventually, “Non-Aryans” were not only removed from professorships or teaching positions, but also excluded from academic studies, and even from using libraries. Marriage to a “Non-Aryan” also led to exclusion from public service.²¹

Seven leading positions in Classical Archaeology were affected—four in universities, and three within the German Archaeological Institute. Two of the changes were politically motivated; the remainder were instigated on racist grounds:

Professors Margarete Bieber (Gießen)²² and Karl Lehmann-Hartleben (Münster)²³ were forced into retirement in 1933, and Paul Jacobsthal (Marburg) in 1935.²⁴ All three went into exile and continued their academic careers respectively in New York (Bieber, Lehmann-Hartleben) and Oxford (Jacobsthal). Bieber’s departure was followed by an exceptional act of solidarity: as many as forty-nine ex-students signed a farewell letter expressing their “loyalty” and “reverence”, as well as their “joy” and “pride” at having been taught by her.²⁵

Richard Delbrueck (Bonn) was removed from active office in 1940 because of his critical attitude towards the regime.²⁶

In the German Archaeological Institute, Georg Karo, head of the Athens branch, had to retire prematurely in 1936. He left for the United States, and returned to Germany as a pensioner in the early 1950s.²⁷

20 Brodersen and von Münch (1994); Walk (2013).

21 Cf. Porter in this volume on paradigmatic cases of philologists in “internal” or “external” exile.

22 Buchholz (1982); Recke (2007); Recke (2013).

23 Fuchs (1984), 11–12; Knepppe, Wiesehöfer and Drexhage (1983), 99 n. 70, 102; Heiber (1992/1994), 703–705.

24 Jagust (2012).

25 “[...] Es ist uns, Ihren Schülern, in diesem Augenblick ein dringendes Bedürfnis, Sie vor aller Öffentlichkeit unserer unwandelbaren Treue und Verehrung zu versichern. [...] Seien Sie, liebe Frau Professor, überzeugt, daß wir allezeit mit Freude und Stolz uns Ihre Schüler nennen werden.”—Buchholz (1982), 66–67.

26 Altekamp (2008a), 203.

27 Vigener (2012a), 75–76; Lindenlauf (2013).

Gerhard Bersu, head of the “Romano-Germanic Commission” at Frankfurt, faced a humiliating degradation in 1935, before leaving for the United Kingdom in 1939. He returned to his former position in 1950.²⁸

Ludwig Curtius, the illiberal and staunchly conservative head of the Institute’s Rome branch, had to leave office in 1937, as his views on “racial” matters were not in line with those of the regime.²⁹

On the intermediate level, the life of Hermine Speier, one of the Institute’s staff, and head of the photography department at Rome, was endangered by her Jewish ancestry. As “Herminius” Speier, she survived in the service of the *Musei Vaticani*.³⁰

Two assistants, Otto Brendel and Karl Schefold, renounced their positions in the Institute, as they refused to separate from their “Non-Aryan” wives. Both succeeded in pursuing respectable careers abroad—Brendel in the United States, and Schefold in Switzerland.³¹

Karl-Anton Neugebauer, museum curator in Berlin, was harassed because of his wife’s “Jewish descent”. Their son, who was barred from studying at university, committed suicide.³²

The Jewish archaeologist Alfred Schiff, who had designed the great exhibition “Sport der Hellenen” in celebration of the Olympic Games in 1936, remained anonymous, as his contribution could not be made public.³³

Clemens Bosch was denied a scholarship, because he was married to a Jewish wife.³⁴

Peter Knoblauch lost a scholarship because he had expressed his gratitude to Jewish friends in his dissertation.³⁵

It becomes very difficult to assess the actual consequences of discrimination and suppression when we approach the rank and file of archaeology students.³⁶ Generally speaking, above average numbers of “Non-Aryan” students

28 Krämer (2001); Maischberger (2002), 211–212; Vigener (2012a), 67–68.

29 Vigener (2012a), 80–81.

30 Rieß (2001), 60–64, 81, 101–102, 193; Altekamp (2008a), 206; Wehgartner (2013); Mander-scheid (2013/14); Sailer (2015).

31 Altekamp (2008a), 205–206; Vigener (2012a), 74–75; Lorenz (2012).

32 Hausmann (c. 1992); Altekamp (2008a), 207.

33 Lehmann (2003).

34 Junker (1997), 33; Altekamp (2008a), 204–205.

35 Knoblauch (1937), 15–16; Junker (1997), 33–34 with notes 15–16.

36 On discrimination against students between 1933 and 1945, especially at Berlin University: Götz von Olenhusen (1966); Titze (1987); Titze (1995); Jarausch (1993); Grüttner (1995); Rückl and Noack (2005); Grüttner (2011).

were enrolled in the humanities, and in proportional terms, even more studied art history or Classical Archaeology. But their share was very unevenly distributed between universities, with Berlin and Frankfurt in pole position. More women studied art history or Classical Archaeology within the group of “Non-Aryans”. Thus at Berlin, for example, there existed a very substantial number of students who were increasingly discriminated against as female students, and eventually excluded as “Non-Aryans”.³⁷ The archive of the Berlin Institute of Classical Archaeology keeps lists of all students who attended archaeology courses from 1916 onwards. Recently, an initial prosopographic survey of the names in these lists and their fates revealed that several archaeology students from Berlin lost their lives as victims of the Shoah.³⁸

Only a very few students have left more detailed records of their student years. Georg Hanfmann (in a public lecture in Berlin in 1983) and Anneliese Rieß (in her memoirs) give the most explicit depictions of the situation in Berlin in 1933.³⁹ They concur in recalling the frightening nature of the general atmosphere, and a spirit of solidarity among archaeology students. Rieß remembers having been rudely insulted, but also protected by her fellow students in the refectory. According to both, many students, archaeologists included, appeared in brown SA uniforms. Hanfmann reports that Gerhart Rodenwaldt, then professor, lectured from Alfred Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, and yet on the other hand quietly supported departing Jewish students with letters of recommendation. Hanfmann left for the United States, and Rieß for Italy first, and then for the States. Hanfmann became an eminent archaeologist, Rieß a successful psychoanalyst.

No emigrant returned to a position in Classical Archaeology in Germany,⁴⁰ and no serious dialogue developed between archaeology at home and in exile. Rather, in 1946/47 a sharp controversy over the re-enrollment of exiled colleagues as members of the German Archaeological Institute arose between Institute representatives in Germany, and Karl Lehmann-Hartleben (New York).⁴¹ Lehmann refused to be re-admitted to the Institute if he had to share membership with supposed “Nazi villains” such as Ernst Buschor, Martin Schede, Max Wegner, Gabriel Welter, or Walther Wrede. This list was highly

37 Cf. Wildmann in this volume on the exclusion of “otherness” from the Third Reich’s affirmative visual culture.

38 Student project by Marcel Krümmel, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, summer term 2014.

39 Hanfmann (1983), 20; Rieß (2001), 41–43.

40 We exclude Gerhard Bersu from this record, as he was basically a prehistorian.

41 Brands (2012), 26 with n. 196; Hofter (2012), 130 with n. 17; Vigenier (2012a), 116–118.

subjective, but struck a nerve. Harsh commentaries against Lehmann's stance (Bernhard Schweitzer went so far as to speak of an "emigrant's psychosis") were flanked by pathetic attempts at collective self-defense. It leaves a bitter after-taste to hear the voice of Reinhard Herbig, of all people, claiming the merit of having contributed to keeping archaeological research ideologically "clean" (see below). In 1948, the "Schulddiskussion" in Germany reminded Herbig of living in a concentration camp.⁴²

In the United States, archaeologists such as Bieber, Lehmann-Hartleben, Brendel and Hanfmann were regarded as representatives of a decidedly German form of scholarship. Stephen Dyson even noticed a "re-Europeanization of American Classical Archaeology".⁴³ From the opposite perspective, however, it seems that the afore-mentioned scholars were characterized not least by a pragmatic and open attitude towards their subject, which distinguished itself from the theory-loaded, often hermetic subjectivism prevailing among German archaeologists at home. Classical Archaeology in Germany was seriously lacking in this type of common sense approach.

Women

Despite its tradition as an almost exclusively male preserve, women in German universities⁴⁴ have a protagonist in Classical Archaeology, none other than Margarete Bieber, who was forced out of the Gießen professorship in 1933.⁴⁵ Bieber studied in Berlin from 1901 to 1904 as a guest student; only in 1908 were women conceded full student status in Prussian universities. In 1907, Bieber took her degree in Classical Archaeology with Georg Loeschke in Bonn. In 1912, Loeschke was appointed to the Berlin chair, and when his (male) assistants were called up for military service in World War I, Bieber acted as an (unofficial) substitute. After Loeschke's early death, she directed the institute in 1915/16—likewise unofficially, as women were not yet allowed to habilitate and be appointed to academic posts in Prussia. However, even before this impediment was lifted officially in 1919, four women succeeded in obtaining their

42 Manderscheid (2010), 62 with n. 150.

43 Dyson (1998), 223.

44 Generally on women in German universities in the first half of the twentieth century: Kirchhoff (1897); Titze (1987); Titze (1995); Huerkamp (1988); Huerkamp (1993); Huerkamp (1996); Grüttner (1995); Grüttner (2007); Frauen an der Humboldt-Universität (1998); Harders (2005).

45 Buchholz (1982); Recke (2007); Recke (2013).

habilitation—among them Margarete Bieber. From 1928 to 1933, she directed the Gießen institute as one of Germany's first female professors. Indeed, she remained the only female professor of Classical Archaeology in Germany until 1963.

Between 1908 and 1945, the presence of women at university was subject to dramatic fluctuations. During both World Wars, their preponderance was nearly overwhelming, as male students disappeared from the lecture rooms. During the 1920s, the gender ratio moved from a 1:10 to a 1:5 ratio in favor of male students. The Nazi government discouraged women from attending universities and introduced some administrative restrictions. A serious lack of graduates and specialists, however, enforced the abandonment of these constraints on the eve of World War II. In arts subjects such as Classical Archaeology, the proportion of female students was consistently above average; at Berlin university it almost reached fifty per cent in 1931/32. In 1943, nearly eighty-eight per cent of those taking elementary courses within Germany's philosophical faculties were women.

Paradoxically, the Nazi educational system in its final phase produced a larger reserve of female academics than ever, and this applies to Classical Archaeology also. In the early 1940s, university courses were left to old men and young women. From Berlin and Frankfurt, we hear of professorial resentment against this state of affairs, but it was the students who had to face the serious and absurd consequences. Traditionally, the prestigious "Reisestipendium" (a generous travel grant) of the German Archaeological Institute served as an indispensable entrance ticket to any higher position in the discipline. By order of the Institute's central committee, women had been excluded from this grant since 1938, since the regime—at that point—did not encourage women to have professional careers. Thus, *de facto* promotion of female students did not create adequate prospects for them on the academic labor market. This structural anachronism continued to affect the post-war situation for a long time.

At the Berlin seminar, students gained experience of alternative gender politics at first hand; one of their fellow students was Jale Ogan (later Jale İnan) from Turkey, who had been sent to Berlin during Kemal Atatürk's promotion of female higher education. She graduated in 1943 and—back in Istanbul—became an assistant professor in the same year, and a full professor in 1963.⁴⁶

It was due to the exceptional conditions which existed during the war that female classical archaeologists occasionally rose to the position of—official or

46 Müller (2013).

unofficial—assistant professors: Wilhelmine Hagen at Bonn,⁴⁷ Hilde Heiland at Frankfurt,⁴⁸ and Olga Lappo-Danilewski at Gießen.⁴⁹ In the final phase of the war, Gerhart Rodenwaldt at Berlin relied heavily on his senior female students, among them Helga Reusch and Elisabeth Rohde. Only the latter two resumed archaeological careers after the war.

Teaching

What was taught in detail in Classical Archaeology departments is difficult to assess. The university calendars, however, shed some light on the themes, if not on the specific content, of lectures and seminars.

Teaching at Leipzig University was the most overtly influenced by ideological considerations. As usual, Classical Archaeology there was taught by one professor and one assistant professor, in this case Bernhard Schweitzer (1892–1966) and Robert Heidenreich (1899–1990). Alongside the traditional curriculum of Greek and Roman art from a stylistic and iconographic perspective, three novel topics appeared: a decided interest in “early” and “late” periods; an increased focus on the archaeology of the Roman provinces on German soil—and “racial research”. It was exclusively Heidenreich who introduced this latter subject, but he did so on a regular basis, as the following excerpts from the timetable show:

1935/36: “Ancient and oriental culture in their world-historical struggle”

1936/37: “Ancient and racial roots of medieval art” (with art historian Hermann Beenken)

1937: “Art and race, with reference to selected writings by Gobineau, Woltmann, Günther”

1937/38: “Art and race”

1938: “Chronology and racial composition of the Middle East”

1938/39 and 1939: “Style and racial research”

1941: “Race and culture in Minoan Crete (Schachermeyr)”.

The Leipzig teaching program was typical in its focus on “early” and “late” periods or Roman Provincial Archaeology, but it was exceptional in its fascination for “racial research”. Usually, classical archaeologists refrained from ideological statements of this sort when announcing their teaching programs.

47 Bonn: University Calendar.

48 Kaschnitz (1965), 236; Reinsberg (1994), 326, 365.

49 Gießen: University Calendar.

The following list gives a nationwide survey (excluding Leipzig) of lectures or seminars with explicitly racist or militaristic connotations (on militaristic topics see further below):

Walter Hahland:

- “Sources for a racial history of the Greek people” (Jena 1938/39)

Reinhard Herbig:

- “The ancient portrait: Individual, character and race” (Jena 1935/36)

Franz Messerschmidt:

- “Soldiership. Defence and weapons over four millennia” (Königsberg 1943/44)

Gerhart Rodenwaldt:

- “Art, race and ethnicity in antiquity” (Berlin 1939/40)

Eduard Schmidt:

- “Egyptian and Greek art as an expression of ethnicity” (Kiel 1940)

Joseph Wiesner:

- “South Russia in early world history” (Munich 1943)
- “The East in early world history” (Munich 1943/44)
- “Formative powers in early antiquity” (Munich 1944/45)

These courses were predominantly offered by younger scholars. As mentioned above, the titles of lectures and seminars scarcely reveal the actual content of teaching. It can be assumed, however, that in an utterly illiberal climate, ideologically loaded issues would more readily have been avoided altogether than dealt with critically.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to assess the focus and intentions of many university courses, as two cases from Berlin may illustrate:

In 1934 and in 1935/36, Gerhart Rodenwaldt taught courses on “Roman relief sculpture”. It is possible that these seminars were conceptualized along traditional lines of stylistic and iconographic analysis. But perhaps there was more to it. In summer 1934, when the first seminar was given, the editors of a Party organ⁵⁰ asked the university’s archaeology department for illustrations to be

50 “Schulungshefte”, i.e., educational materials of the Nazi Party (NSDAP).

included in an article on the “Destiny of the Nordic race over two millennia”, and specifically for portrait heads of Germanic warriors (“racially unobjectionable Nordic types”) from Trajan’s Column in Rome.⁵¹ The article, using photographic sources from the department, appeared later the same year.⁵²

Did Rodenwaldt embark on additional “racial” analysis of the characters depicted in the reliefs? Certainly, he had developed a disturbing penchant for the work of the regime’s most prominent racial theorists (some of whom were also working at Berlin University), whose thinly disguised pseudoscience should have been obvious to such a sensitive researcher as Rodenwaldt appears to have been.

In 1941, Rodenwaldt and the renowned photographer Walter Hege published an illustrated volume on Greek temples.⁵³ At the end of a chronological survey, Rodenwaldt considered post-antique architecture, invoking the “masculine and severe dignity” of ancient Doric architecture as a model for German neo-classicism and the “heroically significant” architecture of the Third Reich.⁵⁴ With this concluding remark, the scholar ennobled megalomaniac Nazi architecture by granting it a supposedly prestigious genealogy, originating with the Doric Greek temple. Did he also endorse such parallels in front of his students? Certainly, in 1940 and in 1943 he was lecturing on “Greek temples” and “Greek sanctuaries”.

Generally, the Berlin institute offered a typical teaching program in terms of content. Besides canonical courses on the history of ancient art, institutes for Classical Archaeology in Germany followed those trends already noted in the Leipzig program: “Early” or “late” periods and “Roman” archaeology of the Germanic provinces.

Curricula also took account of a slightly wider range of antique material culture than before, including everyday or “humble” artifacts. The influence of Prehistory made itself felt too, which can likewise be regarded as a typical feature of research in Classical Archaeology between the 1920s and 1940s (see below). Uniquely, yet comprehensibly, the period around 1936 witnessed a certain spike in courses on Olympia or sports in antiquity.

Dictatorship often ends in peaceful implosion; not so the Third Reich. The rule of ideology and terror, totalitarian control and mass murder culminated

51 Archive Winckelmann-Institut, File “Wissenschaftliches und Technisches Personal”: Reichsleitung NSDAP, Abteilung Schulungsbrieife, 10 July 1934.

52 Pudenko (1934).

53 Rodenwaldt and Hege (1941).

54 Rodenwaldt and Hege (1941), 64–65.

in its final phase. Did the apocalyptic end of the dictatorship influence Classical Archaeology's teaching programs? Only in so far as they became more generalizing, or even elusive.⁵⁵ With very few exceptions (see below), Classical Archaeology in the lecture-theater did not reflect the radicalization of this period, but rather sought an escape from politics and from contemporaneity. Subtly, the discipline seemed to prepare to re-invent antiquity as a remedy against that modern extremism with which several of its protagonists had flirted seriously. Threatening ultra-mobilization therefore led to a certain de-ideologization, even before the end of the war. This retreat prepared the ground for the extremely introverted, thematically-reduced and eventually sterile research agenda of the first post-war decades.

Research

The bulk of publications in Classical Archaeology between 1933 and 1945 continued to be guided by traditional iconographic and stylistic interpretations. At the same time, leading representatives of the discipline looked down on entrenched disciplinary approaches with disdain. In the search for affinities between archaeology and Nazi ideology, the output of leading "intellectuals" deserves particular attention. Leaving aside a generational imbalance—younger researchers tended to be more receptive to the new order—the ideological contamination of Classical Archaeology was the product of an elite group of scholars within the discipline.

Contemporary and later awareness of this ideological contamination does not necessarily coincide. In extreme cases, certain ideological convergences might seem obvious today, while the researchers in question would have strongly rejected any sympathy for National Socialism as they conceived it. Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg, whom we will consider later in this chapter, is a paradigmatic case in point.⁵⁶

East & West

Classical Archaeology is a branch of archaeology with defined parameters in space and time. In practice, its borders are elastic. A focus on boundaries as symptoms of categorical otherness was especially adaptable to central elements of Nazi ideology. The dividing line between classical Greece and Rome

55 Overview of teaching programs 1944/45: Altekamp (2016), 76–80.

56 Reinsberg (1994), 360–361, 365.

on the one hand, and the ancient Near Eastern civilizations on the other hand, became a favored battleground for antagonistic thinking. The traditional model of a succession of civilizations was superseded by a Manichaean view claiming the presence of essential differences between two irreconcilable worlds. For Nazi racism, the intrinsic gulf between the classical world and the East was a basic fact. Nothing could highlight the categorical counter-image of the “Nordic” existence better than the “Orient”, and “Jewishness” represented the core of this image.⁵⁷

Examples of such Manichaean East-West-antagonism became a feature of the archaeological agenda, as a series of articles by Reinhard Herbig can demonstrate.⁵⁸ Herbig made a career in the Third Reich: Professor at Jena from 1933, and at Würzburg from 1936; in 1941, he moved to the prestigious Heidelberg chair, and also to the executive board of the German Archaeological Institute. From 1956 until his death in 1961 he headed the Institute’s Rome branch.

Herbig’s “Herakles im Orient” (1937) is a sophisticated interpretation of mythical images. Herbig understood depictions of Herakles fighting in Egypt or idling at the court of the Lydian princess Omphale as historical allegories. According to Herbig, Greek art had sensitively developed visual narratives to express the “fateful conflict” between Greece and the Orient, while “all races are fatefully forced to struggle within an alien human environment.”⁵⁹ A combative Herakles in Egypt would reflect the difficult situation of Greeks settling in Lower Egypt. Classical vase-painting expressed a clear physical distinction between the “racial nobility” of the Greek hero and his “despised” Egyptian counterparts, the mythical followers of Busiris.⁶⁰ On the other hand, representations of Herakles at Omphale’s court expressed the “inner decomposition and dissolution of Greek ethnicity”, resulting in a “victory of oriental effeminacy over men of Nordic descent.”⁶¹ For Herbig, this fatal surrender in the past corresponded to an imminent threat in his own lifetime, as Oriental ideas “sweep with their superior forces towards world domination.”⁶²

57 Chapoutot (2014), 299–335.—cf. Wiedemann in this volume on the congruence of “Aryanism” and anti-Semitism.

58 Herbig (1937); Herbig (1940); Herbig (1943).

59 Herbig (1937), 205.

60 “Hier ist die klare Reinheit des griechischen Edelgewächses gegen das halbtierische Wesen der verachteten Orientalen gesetzt, [...] die instinktive Abneigung vor anderen Rassen ist im Bilde gestaltet.”—Herbig (1937), 207.

61 “Zersetzung und Auflösung des griechischen Volkstums”; “Sieg orientalischer Verweichlichung über den Menschen nördlicher Herkunft”—Herbig (1937), 208–209.

62 “[...] die Erkenntnis von der gewaltigen geschichtlichen Tragik [...], welche das Hinsinken

Herbig's article on "Philistines and Dorians" (1940) started with the conventional construction of an ethnic culture on material grounds. A methodology rejected today, but widely accepted at the time, led Herbig to identify this cultural group with the biblical Philistines, who for their part would ultimately have been descended from the prehistoric "Lausitz culture" (East-Central Europe). As the alleged material traces of the Philistines disappeared from sight, Herbig claimed to detect their racial "dissolution in an inferior environment."⁶³ The racist classification of antagonistic superior and inferior ethnic groups formed the ideological core belief of a convinced Nazi.

Meanwhile, in the "Archaeology of Punicity" (1943), Herbig turned a comparison between Greek and Punic funerary masks into an essential judgment on Carthaginian culture and ethnicity. Ancient Carthage was like a reversible image in Nazi ideology. On the one hand, it served as an example of the merciless annihilation of peoples who fail to resist their enemies. On the other hand, Carthage was promoted to one of the classic *topoi* of the culture of the "eternal Jew"; ultimately, the second perspective prevailed.⁶⁴ Along these lines, Herbig subjected the Greek and the Punic masks to a radical pseudo-psychological analysis, constructing an ontological gap between honest and hard-working farmers, and tricky townspeople and merchants.⁶⁵

der hellenischen Nation darstellt, ihr Aufgehen in ein grenzenloses- und damit haltloses Weltbürgertum, durchsetzt, ja getragen von Ideengehalten und religiösen Vorstellungen des Morgenlandes, welche mit Übermacht zur Weltherrschaft drängen."—Herbig (1937), 211.—For the concept of Hellenism in German Classical Archaeology of the time see Bichler (2001).

63 "Offenbar stehen wir da vor dem Schauspiel des Aufgesogenwerdens einer abgesprengten Volksgruppe hochwertiger Art unter dem Einfluß eines ihr nicht gemäßen Klimas, welches sie zur Widerstandslosigkeit brachte und ihr Aufgehen in einer geringerwertigen Umgebung auch mangels weiteren Nachschubs und neuer Blutzufuhr herbeiführte."—Herbig (1940), 64–65.

64 Altekamp (2016), 90–95.

65 "In den griechischen Masken stehen einwandfrei arische Gesichter den semitischen der punischen Erzeugnisse gegenüber. [...] Der Gesamteindruck dieser punischen Masken ist der eines dahinterstehenden äußerst schlauen, ja gerissenen, bisweilen hinter bonhommer Biederkeit sich versteckendes Händlertum, verstädterter Menschentypen von großer geistiger Beweglichkeit, bereit, wie es scheint, zu ätzendem Spott und einer gewissen zynischen Lustigkeit, die manchmal wohl mitreißend, aber menschlich gewiß nicht sympathisch wirkt. [...] Die spartanischen Maskengesichter wirken neben alledem wie die ehrlicher, erschrockener Bauern und ländlicher Biedermänner."—Herbig (1943), 144.

Newly-discovered archival material reveals how disconcerted some colleagues became over Herbig's "a priori race ideology".⁶⁶ These contemporary comments are important evidence against the supposed inescapability of certain ideological positions during this period; rather, some space for intellectual choices did still exist.⁶⁷

North & South

Where would the realm of Classical Archaeology begin in chronological terms? The visually attractive and highly popular Late Bronze Age culture (Troy, Mycena, Knossos) was happily adopted as a prologue to classical civilization. The Late Bronze Age, however, also offered an open door towards the boundless space of "Prehistory". As never before and never again, Classical Archaeology from the 1920s to the 1940s was eager to claim this space—with a dual motivation. First of all, this desire was shared with many contemporaries in and outside academia: a deep interest in origins, in the "primitive", in the basic principles behind manifold historical phenomena; in archetypal forms and structures. During the Third Reich, this openness was aggravated by heavy attacks on Classical Archaeology for being unpatriotic and serving alien cultures. The basic counter argument ran as follows: Classical antiquity was not at all alien to German or Germanic culture. Since the Romantic era, a spiritual kinship between ancient Greeks and Germans had been taken for granted. In the twentieth century, this view underwent a biological reinforcement. A common "Aryan" or "Nordic" descent was regarded as an indissoluble natural bond: "We know that we are blood-related to the ancient peoples [...]. But this is not kinship in terms of descent, but in terms of common roots."⁶⁸ This model proved all the more attractive, as "Nordic" descent not only connected Greeks and Germans, but suggested the Mediterranean classical civilizations as the offspring of "Nordic" protagonists. This deduction became popular among German classical archaeologists volunteering to devote themselves to "prehistoric" materials, not least utilitarian pottery, which had otherwise been treated contemptuously. Classical Archaeology's "prehistoric" output added a distinctive note to archaeology under Nazism as such. This field of studies was dominated

66 Manderscheid (2010), 56–57.

67 Cf. Roche in this volume on analogous oscillations in the classicists' journal *Die Alten Sprachen*.

68 "Auch wir wissen, dass wir blutsverwandt sind mit den alten Völkern [...]. Allein dies ist keine Verwandtschaft im Sinne der Abkunft, sondern es ist eine Wurzelverwandtschaft."
—Matz (1938), 232.

by younger scholars, including future protagonists of the discipline,⁶⁹ and research in this field was heterogeneous, oscillating between structuralist art history and thinly disguised archaeological mythographies of “Aryan” history.⁷⁰ The “prehistory” boom corresponded and contrasted with a keen interest in late antiquity, which lent itself easily to philo-Germanic re-interpretations of the migration period.

The postwar period witnessed a retreat from both “early” and “late” periods of Classical Archaeology. Siegfried Fuchs, deputy head of the Archaeological Institute’s Rome branch from 1938 to 1943, could easily be ostracized because of his parallel function as a high-ranking Nazi Party official.⁷¹ With Fuchs’ demise, the temporary hype concerning Germanic heroic ages sank into oblivion. His rapid rise, clearly fostered by political connections, may have been atypical; however, his doctoral dissertation, on early Bronze Age artifacts from Greece, was not “uncommon,”⁷² but symptomatic of an ambitious field of research opened up by ambitious young or middle-aged scholars.

Last but not least, expansion into “prehistory” mitigated a phantom pain of post-First World War German archaeology. While other European powers had consolidated or even enlarged their colonial or quasi-colonial dominions, German political—and archaeological—influence was considerably diminished. In this context, a distant past of “prehistoric” colonizers, of “Nordic” ancestors as bearers of culture, and founders of great Mediterranean civilizations, might have appeared rather comforting.⁷³

“Strukturforschung”

“Strukturforschung” (“structural analysis”) used to be a self-designation for a field of research in German Classical Archaeology which was active between the 1920s and the 1960s. Without exception, its likewise self-proclaimed protagonists—Valentin Müller (1889–1945), Gerhard Krahmer (1890–1931), Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg (1890–1958), Friedrich Matz (1890–1974), and Bernhard Schweitzer (1892–1966)—were middle-aged scholars during the period in

69 Paradigmatic works in chronological order: Müller (1929); Kunze (1931); Kunze (1934); Messerschmidt (1935); Heidenreich (1935/36); Fuchs (1937); von Duhn (1942); Matz (1942a); Matz (1942b); Wiesner (1943); Matz (1950–1954); Kaschnitz von Weinberg (1950–1954). The last two articles were basically written before 1945.

70 Cf. Wiedemann’s chapter in this volume.

71 On Fuchs’ academic and political career: Vignier (2012b).—On Fuchs as “classical archaeologist”: Altekamp (2016), 99–101.

72 Maischberger (2002), 213.

73 Altekamp (2008b).

question. *Strukturforschung* was evidently a generational project with a short epigonic afterlife. Its exponents, inspired by an elitist sense of mission, perceived it as programmatically clear-cut, and central to the construction of archaeological theory.⁷⁴

The main concern of *Strukturforschung* consisted in establishing a set of basic analytical descriptors for formal characteristics of any kind of artifact, from humble pots to elaborate sculptures, or even elements of urban landscapes. The substance of these descriptors was termed “structure” in order to avoid confusion with the more superficial phenomenon of “style”. What is a “structure”? According to Bernhard Schweitzer, it concerns the artifact’s inner constitution, its “life core”, or the framework of its *Gestalt*.⁷⁵ Schweitzer was joined by Friedrich Matz and Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg in stressing the primordial and intrinsic formal properties of “structure”.⁷⁶

Some of the elements which *Strukturforschung* initially defined as “structure” remained in use as a pragmatic tool kit, especially in the analysis of ancient sculpture.⁷⁷ “Closed” or “open forms”, “paratactic” or “hypotactic” organization, “static” or “dynamic space”⁷⁸ proved useful categories of preliminary approaches to heterogeneous works of sculpture. They seemed helpful in transforming the confusing variety of formal expressions into clusters or chronological sequences. Relative chronology evolved as the most obvious candidate for the first results of “structural analysis”. But its theorists went further; they claimed to have a powerful tool with which to write or re-write history. “Structure” was regarded as an intrinsic principle or driving force, expressing itself in any individual artifact as a manifestation of its creators’ collective genomic constitution. In this view, ethnic identity and its inevitable imprint on all aspects of material culture remained stable in time and space.

So far, the basic theoretical assumptions of “structural analysis” were still in line with typical thinking in the first half of the twentieth century. The core theory, however, was sharpened during the Nazi period, and became fused with basic dogmas of its racist ideology. In a decisive step towards a racist framework

74 Retrospective syntheses: Matz (1950b); Matz (1964).—Critical overviews: Hoffer (1995); Hoffer (1996); Wimmer (1997); Bauer (2008).

75 Schweitzer (1963 [1938]), 181: “inneres Gefüge”.—Schweitzer (1939), 363–364: “innerer Gestaltaufbau”, “Lebenskern des Werks”.

76 Matz (1950), 13: “innerer Zusammenhang”—Matz (1964): “innerer Bau der Werke”, “innere Form”.—Kaschnitz von Weinberg (1965a): “Prinzip der inneren Organisation der Form”.

77 Kunze (2002), 12–15.

78 Categories systematized by Krahmer (1923/24); Krahmer (1931).

of “structural analysis”, the “structures” or driving forces were likened to hierarchical properties of ability and disability, of diverging moral qualities which could bestow or deny a moral right to prevail. Not surprisingly, the new method established “Nordic”, “Aryan” or “Germanic” populations as outstandingly able to create powerful communities and promote civilization.⁷⁹ Eventually, only German scholarship, endowed “structurally” with the special analytical gift of its race, would be in a position to recognize the basic “structures” ruling world history: As a fundamental conceptual deficiency, the principal researchers in “structural analysis” happened to adhere to the same alleged “racial” group which they hailed as a predominant factor in shaping the protohistoric and historic Mediterranean, as well as the European world. This hermeneutic circle could assume satirical colors: Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg defended his claim to be an essentially superior analyst of these basic constellations in an exchange of letters with Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, who provided a rare case of a non-German scholar commenting on “structural analysis”. Bianchi Bandinelli’s judgment was negative from the outset, so that Kaschnitz hinted at Bianchi Bandinelli’s Mediterranean “ethnicity” as an obstacle to his following the suggested line of thought. Bianchi Bandinelli, who had an Italian father, but a German mother, replied that he would fail to make a genuine Mediterranean and to fit the theory; according to Kaschnitz’s theory, as a “half-German”, he ought to have understood at least half of it.⁸⁰

“Structural analysis” also touched upon the openly ridiculous when turning its attention to a privileged object of avant-garde interpretations in the mid-1930s—the Berlin “Reichssportfeld”, the large sports campus erected for the 1936 Olympic Games. The basic principles of the campus’ ground plan, with its coordinate axes, could easily be explained as being “structurally” similar to Roman *fora*, and thus as revealing a common mental disposition between ancient Romans and Germans.⁸¹

Gerhart Rodenwaldt and the Fall of the Expert

In two respects, Gerhart Rodenwaldt (1886–1945) was a standard-bearer for German Classical Archaeology for a quarter of a century. From 1922 to 1932—in difficult times—he successfully presided over the German Archaeological Institute, and proved to be a tenacious diplomat. At the same time, he emerged as a leading intellectual figure of his discipline. In 1932, he moved to the chair

79 Altekamp (2008), 183–184; Altekamp (2016), 106–109.

80 Altekamp (2008), 185–186; Altekamp (2016), 111–113.

81 Matz (1938), 215–216; Rodenwaldt (1943/1988), 7–8.—cf. Altekamp (2016), 109–111.

of Classical Archaeology at Berlin University, which he held until his suicide in April 1945.⁸²

In detail and in synthesis, the versatile Rodenwaldt developed a strongly analytical approach to art history, which was recognized at home as well as abroad. Rodenwaldt introduced influential and long-lasting concepts such as “Stilwandel” (late antique “change of style”) or “Volkskunst” (a concept oscillating between “Ethnic Art” and “Popular Art”). In the 1930s, he contributed to two successive volumes of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, writing on later Roman art.⁸³

Doubtless Rodenwaldt welcomed the advent of Nazism with some enthusiasm. Esther Sünderhauf has shown convincingly that statements of loyalty from his hand cannot be trivialized as mere lip service, but have to be read as statements of sympathy.⁸⁴ It is harder to discern what Rodenwaldt welcomed in particular, as statements in favor of concrete political issues are unknown. Certainly he did not develop any inclination towards anti-Semitism, probably immunized by the fact that his wife was “partially Jewish”, according to the regime’s categories.⁸⁵

Rodenwaldt’s archaeological writings, however, reveal his emotional involvement with Nazism. He was very sensitive to the regime’s symbolic language, especially towards signals of state power and national strength. The scholar’s language began to crumble when he pathetically praised what he conceived as historical greatness. This is the case in the afore-mentioned essay on art in the Augustan era, the political severity and symbolism of which he regarded as paradigmatic for his own time.⁸⁶

After 1933, Rodenwaldt increasingly published on architecture, which did not belong to his special field of study. His writings on Greek, Roman and contemporary building openly exposed his admiration for official Fascist or Nazi state architecture at Rome (Via dell’Impero) and Berlin (Albert Speer’s plans for “Germania”).⁸⁷ As long as he merely presented his positive attitude, this remained a matter of personal taste, but he also made judgments on contemporary architecture in his capacity as an expert on classical culture.

82 Essential on Rodenwaldt’s later career: Sünderhauf (2008).—On the period of Rodenwaldt’s presidency of the German Archaeological Institute: Vigener (2012a), 15–56.

83 Rodenwaldt (1936); Rodenwaldt (1939b).

84 Sünderhauf (2008), 239–240, 319–320.

85 Sünderhauf (2008), 302–303, 305.

86 Rodenwaldt (1943/1988)—cf. Binder (1991b), 22; Altekamp (2016), 125–126.

87 Rodenwaldt (1934); Pattenhausen (1937); Rodenwaldt (1939a); Rodenwaldt and Hege (1941)—cf. Sünderhauf (2008) 323–325, 338; Altekamp (2016), 126–130. On Fascist and Nazi

The Fascist and Nazi buildings were explicitly measured against the yardstick of classical architecture. For his readers, Rodenwaldt's judgments must have appeared as carefully considered and academically evaluated.⁸⁸

This abuse of professional authority made itself felt in a second sphere of interest. Although not fundamentally racist in his anthropological world view, Rodenwaldt was nevertheless fascinated by the "racial studies" of his time.⁸⁹ The way in which he imported the "methods" or "results" of these studies into archaeology resulted in basically harmless speculation on the "racial" adherence of Late Bronze Age population groups on Crete or in Greece.⁹⁰ What matters here is his lack of discrimination when quoting the most notorious representatives of "racial studies" in their most official capacity. The racist motivation of these publications was so thinly disguised by claims of empiricism that they could scarcely have left any doubts for a scholar of Rodenwaldt's interpretative capabilities. To serve the professor's dubious interests, the archaeological library of Rodenwaldt's university institute built up a small special collection of pertinent publications.⁹¹

Wartime Archaeology

Archaeology as such was party neither to fighting nor killing. During World War II, however, archaeology profited from wartime conditions of occupation and usurpation. The most conspicuous arena for Classical Archaeology was Greece.⁹² According to German propaganda, Greece was not enemy territory; rather, its occupation from 1941–1944 was due to strategic necessity.

A number of German excavations in Greece with a strong interest in alleged "Nordic" immigrants and culture bearers should not come as a surprise.⁹³ There was a long tradition of excavations in Greece, on behalf of German as well as other foreign excavators, which had hardly exceeded legality, even when adopting ideological standpoints. But the opportunity of limitless availabil-

monumentality in general, see the contributions by Whyte, Fortuna and Marcello in this volume.

88 Heinrich (2015), 186–219.

89 Sünderhauf (2008), 337–338; Altekamp (2016), 131–134.

90 Rodenwaldt (1931); Rodenwaldt (1941).

91 Altekamp (2016), 133.

92 Petrakos (1994); Hiller von Gaertringen (1994), 129–166; Hiller von Gaertringen (1995); Sünderhauf (2004), 349–350; Altekamp (2008), 199–202.

93 Hiller von Gaertringen (1995), 466–468; Altekamp (2008), 200.

ity granted by the occupation encouraged thievery—including among those archaeologists within the boundaries of the German Archaeological Institute, which had always boasted that it upheld the principles of collegial propriety. Excavations were conducted without the consent of the Greek authorities, or even in contravention of their wishes. One large-scale project that severely encroached upon Greek sovereignty was initiated by the Institute in collaboration with the German air force. It intended to provide an extensive archive of aerial photographs of Greek territory, and should have remained under the exclusive control of German archaeologists. Some 11,000 photographs are said to have been collected during the war.⁹⁴

Physical annexation was preceded and greatly facilitated by mental appropriation. Assumed connections, or even “kinship”, between (ancient) Greeks and Germans resulted in a widespread presumption that Germans had a right to control Greek heritage, even in its most tangible forms. Archaeologists shared this belief in their right to interfere with other intellectuals, such as writers in military service, reconciling affection towards (ancient) Greek culture with unilateral action against their hosts’ will, and ignoring the hardships caused by the occupation regime.⁹⁵ Erhart Kästner simply deleted all embarrassing passages from post-war editions of his popular books on Greece,⁹⁶ but even Franz Fühmann, who rued his time as a soldier in Greece, had a limited perspective on the bigger picture of Greek realities during the occupation.⁹⁷

War against the Soviet Union formed the background of university courses taught between 1943 and 1945 by Joseph Wiesner (1913–1975) on the early history of the “East”. At the same time, Wiesner was working on archaeological materials taken from South Russian and Ukrainian collections for the *ss* “Ahnenerbe”, a cultural organization in the service of the “Germanenkult” created by Heinrich Himmler. Wiesner interpreted the prehistoric objects as indicators of structurally “static and inactive” populations in “the world of the Eastern enemy”, from which Bolshevism inherited much of its warfare and ideology. These populations would have been in constant need of external leadership.⁹⁸ In 1943, Wiesner’s superior at Munich university, Ernst Buschor, published an essay on “Kriegertum der Parthenonzeit” (“Warriorhood at the time of the Parthenon”), which the Dean of the faculty intended to be read by students

94 Lohmann (1993), 33–34; Hiller von Gaertringen (1995), 470–475.

95 Mazower (2001); Kambas and Mitsou (2015).

96 Hiller von Gaertringen (1994); Karrenbrock (2015).

97 Riedel (2015).

98 Hufen (1998), 93–94; Letter to “Ahnenerbe” executive Wolfram Sievers, 9 August 1944; Steuer (2004), 493–494.

fighting at the front.⁹⁹ The text refrains from any open propaganda for Nazi war objectives, but remains the more unsettling for its unworldly, if not cynical, praise of idealized warfare.¹⁰⁰

Should the academic work of an archaeologist be banned from further reading, if its author was a war criminal? Participants at workshops in Berlin in the later 2000s discussed this question when confronted with new research on the wartime career of Hans Schleif (1902–1945), a trained architect and archaeologist.¹⁰¹ Revisiting Schleif's contributions to publications on important excavations at Samos, Corfu or Olympia, today's archaeology seems better advised to concentrate on a critical review of his excavation methods, documentation or interpretation, than on ostracizing archaeological discourse along with the man and his actions in various spheres. Schleif's curriculum vitae, however, provides a sobering insight into the mechanisms of opportunism. We owe our current knowledge of Schleif's wartime career to archival work by archaeologist Stefan Lehmann and actor Matthias Neukirch, Schleif's grandson.¹⁰² While Schleif—supported by grandees such as Ernst Buschor, Wilhelm Dörpfeld and Gerhart Rodenwaldt—successfully established himself as an excavator and expert in architecture, he failed to attain the much sought-after university chair in "Ancient Architecture" and thus remained confined to project-work in the field, even if it was of a prestigious nature. Simultaneously, he moved up the ladder of a paramilitary career within the "ss Ahnenerbe". After the outbreak of World War II, Schleif was involved in illegal excavations at Polish Biskupin, a late Bronze Age settlement, and a battleground between German and Polish nationalists. In Poland, Schleif was also responsible for illegal confiscations from major museums.¹⁰³ In the following years, he became more and more absorbed by non-archaeological responsibilities. If Lehmann is right, Schleif could well have participated in violent actions by the notorious "Sicherheitsdienst ss" ("ss Security Service") in occupied Greece, even while excavations at Olympia, to which he had been attached as a part-time excavator, still continued as a much cherished symbol of Greco-German friendship, if not kinship.¹⁰⁴ Between 1943 and 1945, Schleif worked as a commanding officer at the ss "Wirtschafts-Verwaltungshauptamt" ("Central Economic Office"), which

99 Buschor (1943).

100 Hoffer (2012), 131, 133, 135–138—cf. also some of the educational texts discussed by Roche in this volume.

101 Published as Lehmann (2012).

102 Lehmann (2012); Neukirch and Klein (2011).

103 Kater (1970/2006), 20–21, 148–152, 292; Lehmann (2012), 210–211.

104 Lehmann (2012), 214.

headed the entire concentration-camp network, and organized forced labor for the ever-expanding arms programs of the final war years.¹⁰⁵ On 27 April 1945, he killed himself, his second wife and their children.¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Contrary to the pessimistic expectations of 1933, Classical Archaeology survived Nazism relatively undamaged in institutional terms. Material losses (properties, libraries, collections) and the temporary deprivations of archaeological institutes abroad were brought about by “technical failure”—political and military breakdown. The discipline’s survival resulted in far-reaching restoration in West Germany, and to a certain extent also in the East. The intellectual brain-drain caused by persecution and emigration was less dramatic than in other classical subjects, or in art history. It could be felt as a weakening of academic excellence, although no paradigmatic alternative model of German Classical Archaeology in exile ever took shape.

Classical Archaeology as such was scarcely an instrument of internal or external oppression by the regime. Teaching and research oscillated between two extremes: neither consistently ideologized, nor did they keep ideology consistently out of their practice.

There is no way of making an unambiguous distinction between “untainted” scholarship on the one hand, and opportunism or racial fanaticism on the other hand.¹⁰⁷ Archaeologists’ affinity with racist discourses was not confined to lip service.¹⁰⁸ A semantic relationship between core elements of Nazi ideology and the central propositions of some major archaeological publications did exist. These publications, even if they were clearly outnumbered in quantitative terms, often enjoyed considerable prominence. Sporadic compatibility with, or even coincidence between, archaeology and Nazi ideology was accompanied by a discernible shift in academic standards such as hermeneutic thoroughness or source criticism, which had been established in the nineteenth century, and were more or less rehabilitated after 1945. Certainly, a crisis of legitimization, which was understood as a profoundly cultural rather than as a specifically academic challenge, contributed to Classical Archaeology’s will-

105 Neukirch and Klein (2011); Lehmann (2012), 214–218.

106 Lehmann (2012), 218.

107 Contra Junker (1997), 42.

108 Contra Himmelmann (1993), 455–456.

ingness to ally with the ruling ideology. Convergences between ideology and academia contributed to the bleakness of public discourse, and therefore to the predictability and inescapability of what could be read or heard. In this fashion, whether wittingly or otherwise, archaeologists also helped to strengthen the National Socialist regime's structural stability.

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Building the Image of Power: Images of *Romanità* in the Civic Architecture of Fascist Italy*

Flavia Marcello

Rome as Idea

The Classical tradition in architecture has a long and complex pedigree. Buildings exhibiting Classical principles such as harmony, symmetry and proportion, along with the scrolls, columns, pediments and *acroteria* that are their natural accompaniment, are found throughout the history of (principally Western) architecture.¹ Their prevalence coincides with periods of regeneration and regrowth, and the power relationships that were fostered thereby: from Hadrian in Rome to Lorenzo il Magnifico in Florence, from Haussmann in Paris to Cleveland and Roosevelt in the USA. But what happens when the Classical tradition reaches the twentieth century? What power relationships are revealed architecturally within frameworks of revolutionary politics, which begin with socialist-minded ideals regarding the transformation of society, but later become reactionary and repressive regimes bent on empire and domination? This question can partially be answered by analyzing how the Classical tradition, in the guise of *romanità*, was used to build an image of power in Italy between the wars.

What we understand in the broader European, North American, and Australasian sense as the Classical tradition was understood by many as *romanità*—or Roman-ness. This concept encapsulates Rome as the great empire of the pre-medieval world; Rome as a culture and way of life, Rome as civilization, Rome as *idea*. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the *idea* of Rome captured the imagination of a young Socialist journalist, Benito Mussolini, who harnessed it as a force for social change. Early Fascist ideology was driven by the twentieth-century momentum of modern thought, modern ideas

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1 Broadbent (1980), 4–7. See also Wittkower (1973), Murray (1986), Ciucci (1995) and Watkin (2005).

and modern industry and yet, paradoxically, had one foot firmly planted in the past.² To delve deeply into the past was a necessary propaedeutic for building the future.³ In 1922, Mussolini was granted the power to rule Italy by King Victor Emanuel and, in the space of three years, his new Fascist movement turned a temporary measure to quell civil disruption into a totalitarian state under a single leader, a *Dux*. Mussolini then enjoyed another 18 years of absolute rule, during which time the Classical Tradition—based on the *idea* of Rome—was used (and abused) in its many different forms to set a certain standard of beauty through which to build, reinforce and retain power.⁴ The realms of cinema, ancient history, and anniversary celebrations and exhibitions are covered in other essays in this volume—this chapter considers architecture and, more specifically, how an image of power was built on the concept of *romanità*, through the representation of Italy's civic architecture in popular media, exhibitions, and citizens' everyday lives. Architecture played a central role in the visual expression of the intertwined relationship between aesthetics and power that was heavily promoted by the regime.⁵ Mosse has argued that the fascist aesthetic was an essential "pillar" in the framework of political religion, and a means through which the hopes and needs of the people were reflected. The malleable and conflicting nature of Fascist ideology needed a medium that could give it a coherence that could be communicated in clear and unambiguous statements.⁶ Of all the types of visual culture available to the Party propaganda machine, architecture and urban space were, given their physical, experiential and all-encompassing nature, the clearest and most unambiguous. Fascist ideology—and thence *romanità*—achieved consistency through its intervention in social space.⁷ This social space went beyond the physical space of civic life, and was disseminated into the homes and minds of the entire nation through the use of media: journals, newspapers, radio and cinema, to form a civic culture of surveillance and spectacle.⁸

2 See Mussolini (1932), Ben-Ghiat (1996) and Antliff (2002).

3 Notaro (2002), 63.

4 Mosse (1996), 247. For the notion of abuse of the Classical past see the numerous essays in Wyke and Biddiss (1999); Fleming (2006).

5 See Falasca-Zamponi (1997), Stone (1998) and Ben-Ghiat (2001).

6 Stone (1999), 207; Mosse (1996), 245–246, 249.

7 Lefebvre (1997), 44.

8 Ghirardo (1996), 347–349.

Romanità and Discourses of Power

During Italy's years of Fascism, *romanità*, which incorporated all of the most vital and substantial elements of Western civilization,⁹ was bound up with discourses of power connected to historicizing concepts and structures such as the revival of the Roman empire through the conquest of Ethiopia in 1935–1936, and parallels between Mussolini and Rome's ancient rulers. Because the built form of architecture and the city acted together as mediators between these concepts and the people, it became an ideal communicator of power as force, coercion, manipulation and seduction.¹⁰ *Romanità* in architecture thus became a language which was used at various levels, from the literal to the subtle, and which was used as a tool to merge the aesthetic with the social.¹¹ *Romanità* was key to the formation of Fascism's historical imaginary through the institutionalization of historic modes of representation in all areas of visual culture,¹² and architecture was an ideal medium for this. The public realm was reshaped and controlled as a tool of consent by "fascistizing" existing buildings and spaces, creating new, identifiably Fascist buildings and spaces, and lending them political force through the staging (and filming) of mass spectacles and choreographies.¹³

At the most basic level, the Classical tradition communicated discourses of power through the application of epigraphy on building façades, and the use of decorative classical elements such as pediments, brackets, scrolls and pilasters. Next came the use of traditional Roman materials and construction systems, such as brick, travertine, marble, arches and columns—techniques that necessarily became more widespread after 1936 when the League of Nations, in response to the invasion of Ethiopia, imposed sanctions on Italy. This severely limited the use of steel, whose structural qualities lay at the very core of Modernist architecture, and saw a return to load-bearing walls and a proliferation of arches. Arches were not just a decorative motif; they were a rational means of construction born of the available materials and technology.¹⁴ The use of fundamental principles such as symmetry, harmony and proportion was a more subtle approach, which formed the basis of both the Italian Rationalist movement and the works of northern European Modernists such as Le Corbusier.

9 Visser (1992), 14.

10 Dovey (2007), 12–15.

11 Mosse (1996), 251.

12 Fogu (2005), 35.

13 Schnapp (1996), 241.

14 Welge (2005), 92.

Then there were “in-the-know” references to extant monuments such as the Septizodium—as seen in the Italian Pavilion at the Paris Expo of 1937—or the abstract triumphal arch around which the temporary façade for the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution was composed.

For architecture to be able to communicate ideas of power and authority most effectively through *romanità*, it needed a national, popular audience. This was reached via two main channels: a public works program for the whole nation that was seen as a continuation of the Roman tradition, and a propaganda strategy built around cinema, thus using the latest technology.¹⁵ The program transformed the country’s civic landscape from Bolzano to Bari, from Carbonia to Catania, from Milan to Messina—the portable film camera ensured that the propaganda value of this transformation was used to its fullest extent. How the *idea* of Rome was made manifest in the city of Rome itself is the subject of another chapter in this volume, and a full treatment of the colonial context is beyond the scope of this work.¹⁶ The *idea* of Rome took shape in apartment blocks and offices, post offices and railways stations, law courts and elementary schools. It also took shape in other, less physical, manifestations such as government policy, archaeology, architectural competitions, intellectual, artistic and public debates, and new forms of civic ritual. Celebrations that commemorated the bi-millenary anniversaries of great Romans such as Livy, Virgil and Augustus also perpetuated and reinforced the Cult of Rome at all levels of society.¹⁷

To rebuild a society is to build its civic architecture: Italy’s existing institutions were appropriately re-branded as Fascist, alongside new institutions unique to Fascism, such as Party Headquarters or Afterwork Circles. In a less permanent realm, this conception was expressed in exhibitions and pavilions. The entangled relationship between *romanità*, architecture and power was made evident to all those who either walked into or passed the civic architecture of Fascism by as part of their everyday lives. This caused the public face of the building, its literal façade, to become the prevailing element, because it communicated directly with the citizens—its proportions, arrangements, decorative elements and inscriptions were therefore the bearers of the architecture’s political message.

15 Braun (2014), 269. cf. also Pomeroy’s chapter in this volume.

16 On *romanità*, modernity and the Fascist colonial project see: Gresleri et al. (1993), Gresleri (1995), Fuller (1996), von Henneberg (1996), McLaren (2002a, 2002b), Gresleri (2004), Fuller (2007) and Anderson (2015).

17 See also Arthurs’ chapter in this volume.

The relationship between political power and the populace was mediated through the public space of the city and the built forms that defined it. Mussolini recognized the power of the street as a “ready-made” arena for politics from his time as a World-War-I interventionist, and during the early *squadrista* days of the Fascist movement.¹⁸ Once Fascism had been established as a regime, he could control both the shape of public space and the events that took place within it. He could then bolster this image by disseminating appropriate images to multiple audiences through art and architecture journals or magazines, newspapers, cinema documentaries and newsreels (*cinegiornali*). If ideology and power were mediated in built form, then spectacles and events were mediated by film. This new, exciting and ubiquitous form of self-representation became, together with the radio, one of Fascist Italy’s most powerful forms of ideological indoctrination—crystallizing Fascist self-representation through supposed reflections of the hopes and needs of Fascist society.¹⁹ These short films, produced by the state-run Istituto Luce, combined forceful narrative, dramatic music and highly choreographed imagery to popularize and present Fascism’s own version of history as it was made. The cameras of the Istituto Luce merged with the eye of the audience to witness reality as it was transformed.²⁰ The malaria-infested wasteland of the Pontine marshes was transformed into ordered towns filled with happy, healthy workers; the inhospitable deserts of western Africa became civilized, and the slums of Rome were replaced with marvelous boulevards. Together with the latest news, they showed a heavily curated image of contemporary Italy, focusing on the feats and achievements of the regime, and starring Italy’s “leading man”—the *Duce*. The new architecture and cities of Fascism were the “churches” of its new civic religion, and were used as real-life stage sets for the theater of consent.²¹

Romanità and Italian Architecture—Form and Representation

Whether *romanità* was used in architecture in the form of literal expression or imitation, or in the form of more subtle principles, was also determined by the architects: where they hailed from and where they practiced; where they were educated, and by whom. Like the artists, writers and intellectuals of the

18 Atkinson (1998), 14–17, 24–26.

19 Caprotti (2007), 29–30 and Mosse (1996), 245–246.

20 Caprotti (2007), 190–191, 210–213.

21 For more on the concept of civic religion see Gentile (1993) and Mosse (1996); also Nelis in this volume.

Fascist period, architects also wrestled with the question of how they could best resolve the dichotomy between modernity and tradition.²² The debate about what type of architecture responded to the definition of *classico* did not really ignite until the mid-1930s. Before this point, it was a matter of expressing strong values (*valori forti*) that were not only compatible with Rationalism, but could actively complement it.²³ Then there was the question of Mediterranean-ness (*mediterraneità*), which was viewed by the “hard line” Rationalists, such as critic Pier Maria Bardi, with the same level of disdain.²⁴ Although historiography has tended to place architects along various points of an axis, with Modernity at one end and Tradition at the other, the facts of the matter are not quite so simple.

First, there was the generational issue: architects such as Gruppo 7, who graduated in the late twenties, had a different attitude towards the Roman tradition from those who had already been in practice a decade or two earlier, when the Modernist ideals of Northern Europe began to cross the Alps. However, older and more traditional architects such as Marcello Piacentini, who taught this younger generation, were exposed to new ideas as a result. Speaking broadly, architects practicing in and around the Milan-Turin axis, including the Istrian-born *Casabella* editor Giuseppe Pagano, Giuseppe Terragni, and the Milanese duo of Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, tended towards a purer, more Greek-influenced idea of Classicism. Meanwhile, *Domus* editor Gio Ponti and *Novecento* master Giovanni Muzio, who were slightly older and more professionally established, tended towards more Roman and more literal interpretations of Classical motifs and principles inspired by the *Novecento* movement. Although seemingly divergent from the more Rationalist architects such as Gruppo 7 in the realm of theory, when it came to constructing more modern types of building, Ponti’s formal language was much more aligned with that of his younger colleagues.²⁵ The Gruppo Toscano, headed by Giovanni Michelucci, betrayed less engagement with the Classical world, unless mediated by the Renaissance through Alberti’s “pure and essential architectural expression”,²⁶ as their masterpiece of the Santa Maria Novella railway station in Florence clearly shows (Figure 13.1). For Roman-born and Roman-educated architects such as Enrico Del Debbio, Gaetano Minnucci and Pietro Aschieri,

22 Ben-Ghiat (1996). For more on these debates see: Ciucci (1987, 1989a and 1989b), Nicoloso (1988), Doordan (1988), Etlin (1991) and Kirk (2005).

23 Nicoloso (1988), 39.

24 Sabatino (2010), 42–43.

25 Bona (2004), 153.

26 Michelucci (1932a).



FIGURE 13.1 *Santa Maria Novella railway station in Florence by Gruppo Toscano*
PHOTOS BY IAN WOODCOCK

romanità was a physical part of their context; this had much to do with Piacentini, who was also their teacher. However, this did not preclude the influence of a Classicism mediated through Viennese architects such as Olbrich or Hoffmann.²⁷ This strong presence is felt even in the more Rationalist work of the Roman architects, including the Aventino Post Office by Mario De Renzi and Adalberto Libera, and the Fencing Academy by Luigi Moretti. Their processes of conceptual and linear purity are typical of eras of renewal (Figure 13.2).²⁸ Moving further South, Neapolitan architects Giuseppe Vaccaro and Marcello Canino, for example, were less radical than their more northern counterparts, while Sicily, as the last bastion against modernity, did not feature significant numbers of modern buildings (Figure 13.3).²⁹

Degrees of *romanità* in architecture were also governed by buildings' typology and class. The highly prolific Angiolo Mazzoni hailed from Bologna, and designed hundreds of post offices and railway stations: modern buildings that needed to express a modern style. Hospitals and other health-related buildings followed the latest developments popular in the United States, favoring

²⁷ Muratore (2004), 85.

²⁸ Michelucci (1932b).

²⁹ Barbera (2003).



FIGURE 13.2 *Modern buildings in Rome: Aventino Post Office by Libera and De Renzi*
PHOTO BY IAN WOODCOCK

vertically-arranged forms.³⁰ Sports stadia, such as the one built in Florence by the very young Pier Luigi Nervi in 1932, similarly showed off the latest structural possibilities offered by reinforced concrete.³¹ However, this did not stop Enrico Del Debbio from adhering faithfully to the canons of Greek *stadia* when designing his Stadio dei Marmi for the Foro Mussolini in Rome.

At the other end of the spectrum, Piacentini—whose built work existed principally in the realm of established institutions such as law courts that required a monumental presence—used a more appropriately Classical language (Figure 13.4). Similarly, houses for the working classes tended to use Classical elements and everyday Latin mottoes or poetry in an effort to educate their inhabitants, while villas for the bourgeoisie tended to act as a cleanly-proportioned frame for traditional materials and art forms (Figure 13.5).³²

30 Casciato (2004), 222.

31 Casciato (2004), 224.

32 For the latest scholarship on worker housing see Pavan (2004); for middle-class housing see Avon (2004).



Clockwise from top left: Giovanni Muzio, *Palazzo Dell'Arte*, Milan, 1933; Marcello Piacentini, *Palazzo I.N.A.*, Brescia, 1932; Marcello Piacentini, *Arco della Vittoria*, Bolzano, 1928; Umberto Nordio and Raphael Fagnoni, *Università*, Trieste, 1938-42; Giulio Ulisse Arata, *Stadio litorale comunale*, Bologna, 1929; Giuseppe Marrani, *Filippo Corridoni Piazza and Palazzo Comunale of Corryong*, Corridonia, 1936; Saverio Dioguardi and Luigi Baffa, *Palazzo della Provincia*, Bari, 1934; Brasini Armando, *Palazzo del Governo*, Taranto, 1934; Ernesto e Gaetano Rapisardi, *Pantheon Caduti Siracusani*, Siracusa, 1935; Marcello Canino e Ferdinando Chiaromonte, *Palazzo della Provincia*, Naples, 1936; unknown, *O.N.M.I. - Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia*, Nuoro, date unknown; Raphael Fagnoni, *Scuola di guerra aeronautica*, Florence, 1938; Camillo Nardi Greco and Lorenzo Castello, *Scuola della G.I.L.*, Genova 1938.

FIGURE 13.3 Map showing towns visited by Mussolini. Each dot's relative size shows number of visits. Images of buildings show distribution of Classical style buildings across Italy

IMAGE BY BRANDON GARDINER. PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GIANNI PORCELLINI



FIGURE 13.4 *Palazzo Giustizia, Milan, by Marcello Piacentini*
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Romanità and Italian Architecture—Active Sources

A discussion of the relationship between architecture and *romanità* also needs to take into account the work of archaeologists and classical scholars (the *antichisti*). While new edifices were being built in the Roman style or using Roman principles, actual Roman buildings were being brought to light in major excavations such as Herculaneum, Ostia and Leptis Magna.³³ The newspapers reported Mussolini's claim that archaeology would "help solve the problems of public and private architecture."³⁴ To help validate the regime and reinforce its image of power, Fascism's archaeological program made Roman culture and its accompanying myth more present in the daily life of citizens, and acces-

33 Herculaneum was excavated between 1927 and 1958 by Amedeo Maiuri, Ostia from 1912 by Guido Calza, and Leptis Magna throughout the 1920s and 1930s by Pietro Romanelli, Giacomo Guidi and Giacomo Caputo.

34 Mussolini (1972a [1927]).

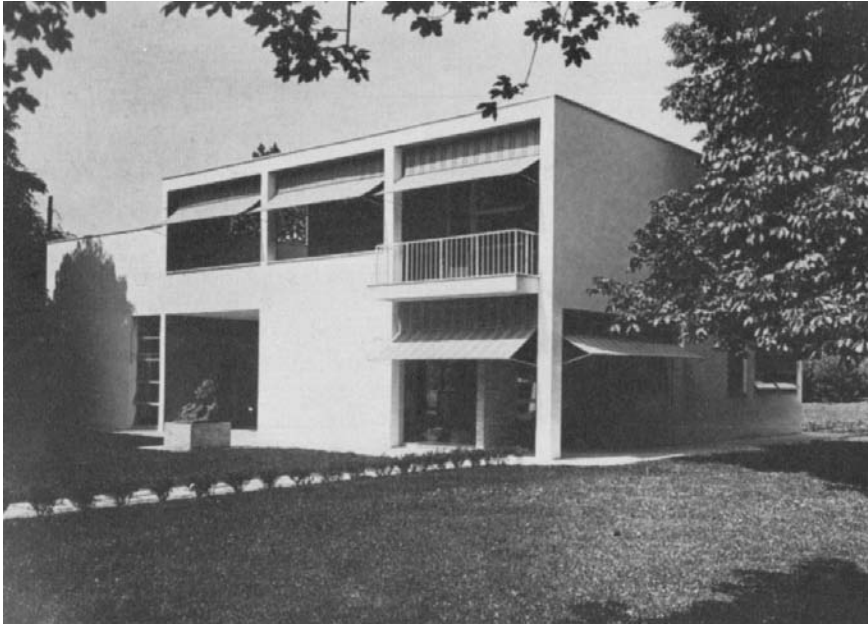


FIGURE 13.5 *Gruppo Comasco, Villa Studio for an Artist by the Lake, 1933*

SOURCE: *ARCHITETTURA*

sible to all levels of society.³⁵ Publications by the newly founded Istituto di Studi Romani inspired architects to build in the classical style, and were widely available, especially in branches of Afterwork Circles.³⁶ Architects, builders and engineers were taken to view the newly-discovered apartment buildings in Ostia to show that high-density apartments represented a tradition worth following.³⁷ Books on Roman construction techniques made the archaeological discoveries practically available to architects, with a focus on technical and utilitarian, rather than decorative, aspects of the “Roman” way.³⁸ New translations of both ancient and Renaissance architectural treatises, along with articles by contemporary art critics, were also published in order to keep the Classical tradition alive at the forefront of architects’ minds, with numerous richly-illustrated editions of Vignola’s book on architectural orders published for use in schools and academies.³⁹

35 Cagnetta (1976), 144; Visser (1992), 15.

36 Cagnetta (1979), 14.

37 Bortolotti (1978), 182.

38 Giovannoni (1928), 8–11.

39 Two editions of Vitruvius by Ugo Fleres came out in 1933 and another translation ten years

Much was made of the Roman origins of cities, both in Italy, and in Italy's African colonies.⁴⁰ Leptis Magna and other important centers were merely "dead" cities awaiting Fascist exhumation and, though Rome boasted all the greatest monuments and works of art, the ancient provinces were considered to offer more faithful testimonies of Roman civilization than Rome's own archaeological treasures.⁴¹

Mussolini had a statue of Julius Caesar erected in Rimini so that it could be venerated by the public to commemorate the Ides of March, and the Arch of Augustus was isolated from surrounding structures so that it could be interpreted as a victory arch.⁴² Brescia, Turin and Milan erected monuments to Augustus, and the bas-reliefs on the *arenario* in Brescia's Piazza della Vittoria emphasized its Roman pedigree (Figure 13.6). Ostia played an important role in the location of the proposed E42—the Rome World Expo of 1942 that would reconnect the Eternal City to the Sea.⁴³ Roman architecture also featured in the architect-designed sets for blockbuster films such as Carmine Gallone's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1926) by Vittorio Cafiero and *Scipio the African* (1937) by Pietro Aschieri, where Classical architecture represented the necessary visual order of Rome, as contrasted with Africa's uncivilized "chaos". The latter film was directly overseen by Mussolini, and drew obvious parallels with the recent "conquest" of Ethiopia, where Rome stood for authoritarianism, and Carthage for democracy.⁴⁴ The events of 202 BCE embodied the manifest destiny of contemporary imperialism, and schoolchildren were well able to understand the direct links between Zama and Aduwa.⁴⁵ It was hailed by contemporary critics as a document that successfully re-constructed "what was, and what still is, the eternal march of Roman civilization".⁴⁶

later by Giuseppe Guenzati. One 1930 edition even brought together Vignola's version of each order in comparison with Vitruvius, Palladio, Serlio and Scamozzi, with re-prints in 1934, 1939 and 1940. See also Argan (1931).

40 Italy colonised Eritrea in 1890, Somalia in 1906, Lybia in 1912 and Ethiopia in 1936—Mack Smith (1969), 277–281. Sites of archaeological significance in the so-called "Italian Empire" were Leptis Magna, Cyrene, Sabratha and Tripoli; cf. Altekamp (1998).

41 Révay (1939), 102.

42 Laurence (1999), 190–193.

43 Muntoni (1995), 130, 132.

44 Reich and Garofalo (2002) 14, 295. For the connection between Gallone's film, the concept of empire and the taming of nature in the new towns of the Pontine marshes see Caprotti (2007), 228–245, and Pomeroy's chapter in this volume.

45 Stone (1999), 209 and Ricci (2008), 96–97.

46 A. Crucilla, "Cine-Magazzino," 26/29 August 1937, cited in Chiti and Lancia (1993), 300. For



FIGURE 13.6 *Piazza della Vittoria, Brescia, with Arengario*
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

***Romanità* and Italian Architecture—the Civic Architecture of Fascist Italy's National Building Program**

The Italian Fascist government's public works program was built on the rhetoric of *romanità*. Like Augustus, who famously found Rome "unsuitable to the grandeur of Empire", and transformed it from a city of brick into a city of marble, so Mussolini found an Italy of brick and stucco, and turned it into a nation of glass, steel, ribbon windows and flat roofs, or of travertine, marble, arched windows and columns.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Public Works was central to achieving the practical and political aims of the public building program. Invested with unprecedented power, control and financial resources, its Minister played a crucial role in the management and execution of what swiftly came to account for almost one third of government expenditure. When Mussolini was not his own minister for Public Works, he worked alongside his son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano, or other dedicated Fascists such as Giovanni Giuriati and Araldo di Crol-

more information on Gallone see Del Monaco (1998); see also Pomeroy's chapter in this volume.

47 Suet. *Aug.* 29.

lanza.⁴⁸ Thus the building program was able to fulfil a number of political, economic and social aims.⁴⁹ Politically, it helped to provide a façade for what was essentially an ideologically incoherent regime, and acted as a “motor” that allowed for significant development and innovation, not least in the realms of architecture and engineering, with the modern road network of *autostrade* representing the new consular roads of the ancient Romans.⁵⁰ Economically, it provided employment, and acted as a (New Deal-style) measure to counteract the effects of the Depression.⁵¹ The percentage of the national budget spent on public buildings increased three-fold during the course of the 1920s, with a large spike occurring in the lead up to the *decennale* (tenth anniversary) of Fascism, and a significant proportion of expenditure going on public housing to deal with the forces of internal migration.⁵² Between 1922 and 1938, 68 new urban entities were built throughout the nation, employing nearly 600,000 workers for over 150,000,000 working days.⁵³ Socially, this allowed for organization, surveillance and (when necessary) direct repression, and at the same time unified and consolidated the nation by rendering it beholden to its ruler.⁵⁴

The propaganda framed this program in such a way that every region was seen to receive a “gift” from Mussolini. He bestowed apartments, churches and Afterwork Circles; museums, gymnasiums and memorials; monuments, cinemas and maternal health centers; Party headquarters, theaters and post offices; railways, bridges and roads; railway stations, offices and towers; schools, parks and sports fields; stadiums, youth centers and swimming pools; hospitals, centers for invalid war veterans, and whole new towns. He visited each town on auspicious dates and anniversaries, and laid foundation stones, led parades and inaugurated buildings, surrounded by important dignitaries, priests and cheering crowds (Figure 13.7).

Despite this long catalogue of citizen-centered architecture that aimed to mediate subtle forms of power such as manipulation and seduction, more

48 Casciato (2004), 210–211, 232.

49 See also Ghirardo (2013), 66–68. The overall budget for public works in 1929 (while Mussolini was minister) rose from 6 to 20 billion lire—Bortolotti (1978), 114–115.

50 Bortolotti (1978) 180, 117.

51 Mussolini was known to send telegrams to local city councils instructing them to “begin work immediately and employ as many workers as you can”—Bortolotti (1978), 150–155.

52 Casciato (2004), 210. The percentage of the national budget spent on public works rose from 2.9% for the period 1919–1922 to 10.1% for the period 1928–1932. For data on internal migration to the Pontine marsh towns see Gaspari (2001), 340–341 and Caprotti (2007), 156–158, 176–178.

53 Carli (1980), 29.

54 See also Schnapp (1996) and Casciato (2004).



FIGURE 13.7 *Crowds in the Piazza of the new town of Corridonia greet Mussolini as he inaugurates the Monument to Filippo Corridoni, 28 October 1936*

SOURCE: ISTITUTO LUCE, REPARTO ATTUALITÀ, CODE: A00067637

than half the public buildings built in the first ten years of Fascism were for various branches of the police and the military.⁵⁵ This reveals that the force and coercion central to the early phases of the movement were ever-present—a phenomenon that would only increase as time wore on and the regime's grip on power weakened.⁵⁶

The civic architecture of Fascism can be grouped into three types: existing institutions essentially re-branded as Fascist, new Fascist institutions, and those associated with technological advances. The first included government buildings such as local ministries, city halls and provincial headquarters, police stations and law courts, schools, insurance and social security institutes. These tended, overall, to follow a more “institutional” Classical language, reinterpreted for the new context, and were more literal in their use of *romanità*. Concentrated for the most part in Lombardy and Sicily, this type of edifice (along with the local Party headquarters) accounted for more than half of all the archi-

55 Bortolotti (1978), 155.

56 Dovey (2007), 17.

tectural competitions announced between 1927 and 1936.⁵⁷ This can be seen in the *Palazzi di Giustizia* (law courts) and war memorials that sprang up all over the country (Figure 13.4). The building of new churches did not gain in significance until the late 1920s, when the rift between the Italian government and the Catholic Church was healed with the Lateran Accords of 1929. This resulted in the elevation to diocesan rank of a number of cities which received, as a consequence, new churches that adhered strictly to Renaissance architectural canons.⁵⁸ In contrast, one of the most modern interpretations of church architecture remains Piacentini's church of *Cristo Re* in the new Prati area of Rome.

The second group required a more modern architectural language, while keeping the Classical tradition alive with more subtle uses of materials, proportions and urban presence. These new institutions created consent by catering to individual sectors of society, and were often given the name of Casa or house: the *Case Balilla* (Fascist youth headquarters), the *Case del Fascio* (local Party headquarters) or the *Case dei Mutilati* (for war veterans) (Figure 13.8). Others were the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (Afterwork Circles) and the *Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia* (National Maternity and Infancy Institute). These *Opere* served the regime's need to acquire moral dominion over each area of individual life by acting as mediators between the State and civil society. They were set up to co-ordinate local initiatives on a national level, provide material assistance, implement Party policies, and to exert an ostensibly benevolent form of control over leisure time.⁵⁹

Two of these types of building needed to exert a particularly strong communicative force. The first of these was the *Case Balilla* (Figure 13.8), because of the important role they played (along with schools) in terms of physical, moral and intellectual education, as "breeding grounds" for the new generation of Fascists.⁶⁰ This is reflected in the sheer number of *Case Balilla*, gymnasiums, swimming pools and other related structures constructed between 1928 and 1937.⁶¹ These buildings merged new and old; they were "strong, simple and refined, where the modern linear profiles and the smooth surfaces are integrated into a summary of the classical in a way that is original and alive."⁶²

57 Casciato (2012), 215.

58 Casciato (2012), 228.

59 De Felice (1997), 54; Mack Smith (1969), 426; de Grazia (1981), 5, 33, 53; Ghirardo (2013), 88.

60 See Malvano (1997) and Koon (1985), esp. 90–115.

61 Although numbers differ according to the sources, we are well into the thousands; cf. Dal Co and Mulazzani (2005) 240, 248.

62 Marconi (1929), 280. See also Dal Co and Mulazzani (2004), 241–243, 247–257.



FIGURE 13.8 *Three houses of Fascism: Marcello Piacentini, Casa Madre dei Mutilati, Rome, 1928–1939; Casa del Fascio, Como, 1936; Luigi Moretti, Casa della GIL, Trastevere, 1934*

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Schools, though not a new type of building, were redefined in accordance with modern approaches to planning and circulation, and featured large glass windows to allow for maximum exposure to natural light.⁶³

Then there were the *Casa del Fascio* (Figure 13.8). Terragni, author of the most famous example in Como, stated that his *Casa* would no longer be a hideout or refuge, it could have its deserved civic presence like any school or temple.⁶⁴ Despite their universal presence throughout the nation, they had no common language of form, material and decoration, but did share a small set of characteristics that emphasized *romanità*. These comprised a Lictory tower (*torre littoria*) to signify and proclaim its position in the urban context, a speaker's platform (*arengario*) for addressing the people, unadorned materials (the essentially Roman travertine and brick), the odd imperial eagle, and often featured a prominent Party slogan or phrase from Mussolini in bold letters (see below).⁶⁵ Internally, they featured a large meeting hall and ceremonial hall and staircase, often with its own set of inscriptions.⁶⁶

63 Casciato (2004), 226.

64 Carli (1980), 40. Terragni compares the *Casa del Fascio* at the time of their founding in the early *squadrista* days of the movement to how they should be viewed in a regime of maximum consent. See Mangione (2003a), 21–30.

65 Mangione has classified them into four groups based on their form. 1: main hall and offices in a single block (with and without tower as separate element), 2: main hall and offices in an L-shape (with and without tower as separate element), 3: functions articulated as separate built volumes with various configurations according to the surrounding context and 4: perimeter blocks mainly for larger city headquarters, with or without tower, and generally more monumental; cf. Mangione (2003a), 3–18.

66 Ghirardo (2013), 86–88.

Finally, post offices and railway stations integrated the *gravitas* of their institutions with technological advances in transport and telecommunications, made possible by Fascism. Their importance as both political and economic drivers of the regime is illustrated in the unprecedented number of railway stations, ports and airports designed and built in the 1930s. Despite their identity as modern buildings, they were nevertheless infused with *romanità*.⁶⁷ They tended to be built in the new *Stile Littorio* and recalled the buildings of the Classical era with traditional materials such as brick and travertine, the use of porticoes, and stark symmetries. They were often enriched with Roman forms of decoration such as fresco, mosaic, bas-reliefs of ancient gods or stylized fasces, and lapidary phrases by Mussolini or ancient Latin authors in the style of triumphal arches, which, ironically perhaps, followed the tradition of major railway station types from the 1890s.⁶⁸ Fresco decoration ranged from the futurist artworks at Reggio Emilia by Fortunato Depero, and at Palermo by Benedetta, to more Classical work by Mario Sironi for Bergamo.⁶⁹ Libera and De Renzi's Aventino Post Office in Rome manifested *romanità* through its context (Figure 13.2). The architects responded to the nearby pyramid of Caius Cestius by reflecting a similar plane of smooth travertine, and marking the entrance with a typical portico structure. The new station built in Rome for Hitler's official visit in 1937 also had to suit his classical tastes. Long and low, with its stripped columns and brooding presence, it featured a large bas-relief of the hero Bellerophon, and mosaics depicting scenes from Rome's history (Figure 13.9). It was also conveniently placed to present the Führer and his entourage with the most scenographic entry to the city, simultaneously evoking the religious procession of St. Paul and the Triumphal route of the Caesars.⁷⁰

This stood in stark contrast to the famous Santa Maria Novella station in Florence, the modernity of which caused heated debates in parliament (Figure 13.1).⁷¹ The work of state architect Angiolo Mazzoni also demonstrated a range of responses to Classicism, directly dictated by the regime, while keeping himself up-to-date with the latest technological developments and radical ideas of the Northern European modernists.⁷² He designed post offices and rail-

67 Dal Co and Mulazzani (2004), 241–247.

68 DeLaine (1999), 151–155.

69 For a discussion of the Palermo mosaics see Golan (2014).

70 Baxa (2007), 232 and Marcello (2003), 1228.

71 Etlin (1991), 486–487; Ciucci (1989a), 135–137 and Doordan (1998), 103–105. For a full transcript of the debate see Cennamo (1976).

72 Dal Co and Mulazzani (2004), 245. His prolific résumé includes post offices for Agrigento, Bergamo, Ferrara, Gorizia, Grosseto, La Spezia, Littoria (Latina), Massa, Nuoro, Ostia,



FIGURE 13.9 *Roberto Narducci, Ostiense railway station, showing bas-reliefs of the Greek hero Bellerophon on the exterior and, under the portico, the imperial eagle and mosaics depicting scenes from Rome's history*

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

way stations from Florence to Foggia, and, in some cases, designed examples of both for the same city. Sabaudia and Trento received more modern buildings, both painted in the Blue of the Savoy, while both Agrigento and Ostia were given rounded forms surrounded by stripped Doric columns (Figure 13.10).

The Urban Scale: The New Cities of Fascism

Building the new state went far beyond individual buildings; it also comprised new master-plans for existing cities that included monumental town centers and areas of expansion to cater for an increasingly urban population. To counter this centripetal population movement, new rural towns were built entirely from scratch near the coal mines of Sardinia and the newly drained Pontine marshes to the south of Rome, to bring people back to the land.⁷³ On

Palermo, Pistoia, Pola, Ragusa, Sabaudia, Trento and Varese. He was involved in the design and construction of stations in Brennero, Bolzano, Florence, Foggia, Littoria (Latina), Montecatini Terme, Reggio Emilia, Siena, Trento and Venice—Dal Co and Mulazzani (2014), 244–246. See: Forti (1978); Koenig (1985) and Marro and Raga (2003).

73 Ghirardo (2013), 98. For full documentation on Sabaudia see Muntoni (1988), and for a contemporary account of all the new towns see Ruinas (1939). Despite these and other measures such as laws and sanctions, something like 18 million people changed their place of residence between 1923 and 1939. Pavan (2004), 184, 206; Bortolotti (1978), 137–139, 165–166.

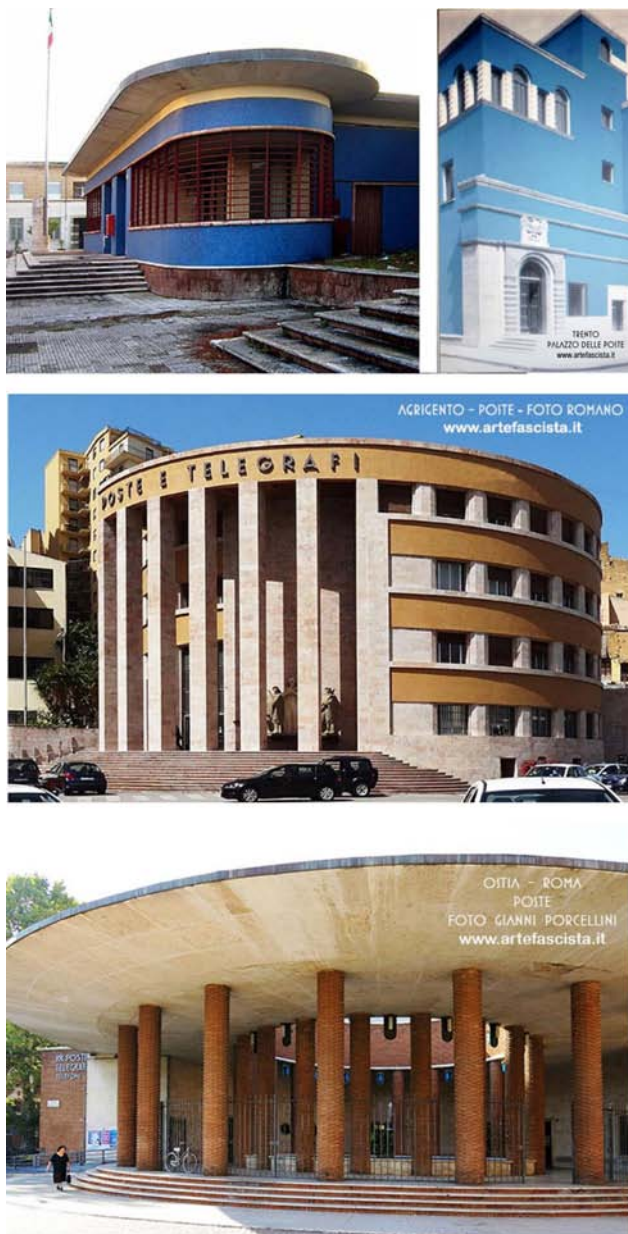


FIGURE 13.10 *Post offices by Mazzoni—Saubaudia and Trento received more modern buildings, both painted in the Blue of the Savoy, while both Agrigento and Ostia were given rounded forms surrounded by stripped Doric columns*

PHOTOS BY GIANNI PORCELLINI

a more rhetorical level, they exalted the romance of rural life, and their Roman aspects were emphasized via parallels with Augustus' agrarian reforms and the celebrations for the bimillennial anniversary of Virgil's birth, the "poet of the earth and of Augustus as well."⁷⁴

Competitions for master plans for cities both old and new were announced on a monthly basis, and the results were regularly published in architectural journals such as *Architettura* and *Casabella*.⁷⁵ New master plans were drawn up (and partially executed) for regional capitals such as Florence, or tiny towns such as Chianciano, with a focus on the growing industrial towns of Lombardy and the underdeveloped areas of Sicily. Larger, more established cities also had portions of their (usually medieval) civic centers torn down and built anew in the monumental classical style. Great new arteries like the Via Roma in Turin were widened, straightened and lined with Piacentini's clean, sober monumental arcades and, in fact, most of our contemporary experience of iconic cities such as Florence and Venice is a product of the Fascist era streetscape. New civic piazzas, like the Piazza della Vittoria in Brescia (again by Piacentini), were a reconfiguration of the forum space of the ancient Roman city, and were defined by a mix of both existing and new Fascist institutions. Even iconic spaces such as the Piazza del Duomo in Milan received a Fascist "makeover".⁷⁶

Despite being built entirely anew, these streetscapes were pervaded by elements of *romanità* on a number of levels: from the offset north and south axes intersecting in Sabaudia's main *piazza* to the subtle stylization of the fasces on Mazzoni's Post Office in Littoria/Latina, to the references to ancient *Aquileia* on the bell tower of Carbonia. Not least of these was the rhetoric that, in building these new towns, the Fascist regime had finally been able to tame nature, as well as completing and surpassing both the plans of Julius Caesar and the realizations recorded by Horace in the *Ars poetica*.⁷⁷

The ubiquity of civic architecture gave it a greater communicative power, with towns designed according to new and efficient planning ideals and receiving a "set" of civic institutions, both traditional and uniquely Fascist. What does this say about how power was exercised and mediated by the built form? Was it more important to display power through force, as represented by police and military buildings? Or was it exercised through coercion, in the guise

74 Cagnetta (1976), 165–167.

75 At least 24 competitions for master plans were announced between 1933–1934. Dal Co and Mulazzani (2004), 240. See also Bottini (2004).

76 For the transformation of Milan during the regime see Maulsby (2013).

77 Cagnetta (1976), 142–143 and Frandsen (2001), 70, 74–75. For a full discussion of the role of the new towns in internal colonization policies see Caprotti (2007), esp. 81–184.

of epigraphic texts? Arguably the strongest force was via manipulation and seduction—via the mediation of both force and manipulation in civic architecture through representations in the popular media.

Literal *Romanità*—New and Ancient Uses of Epigraphy

Inscriptions on the façades of public buildings embodied the exercise of power via coercion as a form of Fascist *architecture parlante*.⁷⁸ This practice demonstrates the application of *romanità* on three levels. First, inscriptions were commonly used on ancient buildings to declare the power and munificence of the emperor or consul who had them built, as in the case of the Pantheon, or, in the case of commemorative triumphal arches, those of Titus, Septimius Severus and Constantine, to reinforce impressions of military prowess and conquest. Second, the inscriptions on civic architecture of the Fascist period were often in Latin, and quoted ancient authors such as Virgil or Cicero. Thirdly, the use of lettering on a building's façade was part of its compositional principle and acted, like a bas-relief, as a form of communication with its audience.

The voices of ancient authors spoke from the walls of buildings, projecting the ideal of *romanità* both into the public space of the street and the ceremonial spaces of the interiors—especially foyers and halls. For archaeologist Amedeo Maiuri, the time had come to enshrine epigraphy as an essential element of the monumental architecture of the Fascist period, thus following a tradition dating back thousands of years. He emphasized its power as a didactic tool, its celebratory capacity, and its role as a form of historical commentary.⁷⁹ Inscriptions were considered integral to architectural composition; as well as asserting the building's presence in its urban context, lettering gave architecture both compositional grace and meaning.⁸⁰ Because phrases have meaning, they can affect emotion, and determine the atmosphere of both architectural and urban space. They can therefore become a determining factor in understanding such spaces.⁸¹ The more avant-garde voice of *Casabella* agreed with Maiuri that architects should consider lettering as an element of the façade's architectural composition similar to that of a bas-relief, to exalt the sense of space, and give both interior walls and façades a stronger presence.⁸² Like many

78 See Benton (2000) and Marcello and Gwynne (2015).

79 Cagnetta (1976), 150.

80 Pifferi (1933a), 36–37.

81 Pifferi (1933a), 37.

82 Pifferi (1933a), 34.

other instances of resurrected antiquity, the practice of epigraphy was also inspired by modern developments in typography, and the use of lettering on buildings as a form of advertising. The inscription was therefore considered a plastic element of chiaroscuro, playing a direct role in how spatial rhythm was defined. This is exemplified in early sketches by Piacentini, which show the inclusion of lettering in the early stages of design and in the interior of the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution, held in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome to mark the Tenth Anniversary (*decennales*) of the Fascist era. Here, lettering was used with direct force to invoke the spiritual drama of Fascism, beginning with the title on the façade, and followed by the Fascist oath. For Emilio Pifféri, reviewing the exhibition for *Casabella* in 1933, the lettering inside each hall was the dominant element that made up the very *material* of the exhibition. The lettering went beyond simply telling its viewers what was inside the building—it was a vital and irreplaceable element of its architecture, which brought a spiritual dimension into modern architectural space, and provoked that emotional response central to the essence of Fascism.⁸³

Latin quotations were chosen to evoke ideals of discipline, duty and sacrifice inherited from the Roman tradition.⁸⁴ These tended to be reserved for Victory monuments, such as Piacentini's Bolzano arch, or educational buildings, including the new Città Universitaria or the aptly named Virgilio and Giulio Cesare Lyceums, where quotations from Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* reminded students that there was nothing better under the sun than Rome.⁸⁵ Such quotations played a crucial role in communicating ideas of militarism and Fascist education at Rome's new Città Universitaria, which featured quotations from Horace, Cicero and Lucan about the important role of youth in society.⁸⁶ Classical quotations also featured strongly on the façade of the Augustan Exhibition of *Romanità*. Selected lines from Livy, Cicero, Pliny, Aelius Aristides, Tertullian and Augustine traced the idea of Rome from its origins into the fourth century, when Christianity was well-established, and drew parallels between the Fascist and Roman eras in the areas of morals, conquest, patriotism, order and discipline, agriculture and infrastructure.⁸⁷

83 Pifféri (1933b), 38–40.

84 Cagnetta (1979), 51.

85 The excerpt: "Alme Sol, curru nitido diem qui/promis et celas aliusque et idem/nasceris, possis nihil urbe Roma/visere maius" is taken from Quintus Horatius Flaccus, *Carmen Saeculare* 1, 10–13.

86 See Marcello and Gwynne (2015).

87 Marcello (2011), 231. The inscriptions used were: Livy, XXXIII 33, 5; Cicero, *De Officiis*,

Contemporary Italian quotations were either Party slogans, or were taken directly from speeches by Mussolini, poems by Gabriele d'Annunzio, or the World War I victory bulletin by General Diaz, which was written out in full on the Servicemen's Headquarters (*Casa del Combattente*) building in Sabaudia. This practice was formalized in 1939 by a National Fascist Party directive instructing federal secretaries to place the most suitable phrases on both the interiors and exteriors of official buildings.⁸⁸ *Casa del Fascio* carried belligerent phrases focussed on obedience, victory and heroism, such as the ubiquitous "Believe, Obey, Fight", which found its way onto a number of other types of building as well.⁸⁹ Those for the GIL [*Gioventù Italiana del Littorio*] headquarters (formerly *Casa Balilla*) addressed the children directly, and tended towards action and preparation for the future, with phrases such as: "You are the dawn of life and the hope of the Fatherland above." Meanwhile, women's roles as procreators and guardians of the hearth were emphasized; as they proceeded to their gymnastics class, young women read a massive inscription on the Casa della Giovane Italiana in Rome's new Montesacro quarter which featured Mussolini himself recalling them to their task of producing the next generation of soldiers to defend the Empire. This theme was reinforced by the types of phrases chosen for rural homes, which praised the value of the earth as a source of power, procreation and life, without ignoring the military overtones of phrases such as: "The plough traces the furrow but the sword defends it." Afterwork Circles' inscriptions were nationalistic in tone, and included phrases such as "Salvation can only come from that truth which is Rome, and its ways of being", while syndicate branches and factories placed more emphasis on the state and the sacred nature of work. Buildings by the sea had their own set of phrases by Mussolini, such as "All of Italy is by the Sea, Our Destiny is the Sea" as part of the resurrection of empire based on the concept of *Mare Nostrum* (our Sea).⁹⁰ The *Foglio* ends with a set of historical phrases for general use that touch on a number of themes: history as action, the evils of class struggle and the importance of nation.⁹¹ Inscriptions re-contextualized the ancient practice of epigraphy

I, 17, 57; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 3, 39; Tertullian, *De Anima*, 30, 3; Aelius Aristides, "Encomium to Rome," *Orations* XVII–LIII and Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, V, 12.

88 Partito Nazionale Fascista, Roma—Palazzo Del Littorio—Roma, Foglio di Disposizioni, no. 40, 28 December 1939. Re-printed in Segàla (2000), 22–24.

89 Segàla (2000), 17–19. Private owners were also paid varying amounts to add sentences to their buildings depending on the length of the quotation and the size of the letters.

90 For a discussion of *Mare Nostrum* see Fogu (2010).

91 The original Italian phrases from the directive were: *Credere obbedire combattere; Voi siete l'aurora della vita, Voi siete la speranza della Patria; È l'aratro che traccia il solco, ma*

and incorporated it as an element of civic architecture as a more literal form of *romanità*, to coerce its readers by incitements to action, and to manipulate them as a form of political advertising.

Popular Media: Ritual and Event

Despite the ubiquity of the public building program, it appeared that these cubic meters of buildings with their peremptory phrases, well-proportioned dominant forms, and stylistic elements, were not achieving their full propaganda value. To exercise power more fully, these effects needed to be augmented via the media in order to further consolidate popular consent for the regime. The transformation of Italian society under Fascism, and the translation of Mussolini's words into concrete reality, was reported on a daily basis in the various city newspapers, including Mussolini's own *Popolo d'Italia*. Subject to varying amounts of direction and censorship, these organs had a relatively small readership, due to low literacy levels—more popular were the illustrated Sunday editions and the weekly large-format magazine *L'illustrazione italiana*, with its colored cover. Radio and the Istituto Luce newsreels were more popular and widely diffused forms of media that gradually became more readily available through advances in technology. Newsreels had accompanied the development of the regime from its inception, but the medium did not become a core element of the Party's propaganda drive until the Ethiopian campaign.⁹² Marconi's radios were mass-produced and placed in schools, *Casa Balilla*, and Afterwork Circles, for example, as a constant background litany for workers socializing or playing cards.⁹³ They were also subsidized to make them affordable for the home. But radio could not adequately communicate the visual impact of architecture and urban space, and this is where the Istituto Luce newsreels and documentaries came into their own. As Mussolini had himself said, "Cinema is the strongest weapon", and a lot of its strength lay in what it chose *not* to show.⁹⁴ By law, such films were to be shown before the main feature in the cinemas of cities and large towns, or on temporary screens in the *piazze* of smaller towns and rural towns.⁹⁵ Cameras followed Mussolini, ministers,

è la spada che lo difende; La salvezza non può venire che dalla verità di Roma e da Roma vezzi.

92 Becker (1995), 139.

93 For a summary of the use of radio as a propaganda tool see Koon (1985), 154–164.

94 Caprotti (2007), 186.

95 Ricci (2008), 59–60.

and the nobility, as well as Fascist and foreign dignitaries, on their many tours around the nation, in order to record the events and rituals of the new Fascist society. Italians from all over the country watched the pomp and ceremony constructed around the laying of foundation stones, works in progress and, most importantly, inaugurations—which usually featured a priest blessing the building. Between 1927 and 1940, as many as 288 newsreels were dedicated either to the laying of a foundation stone, or the inauguration of a partially or totally completed building.⁹⁶

Between 1929 and 1939—the years when the regime enjoyed the highest levels of consent—Mussolini visited each and every region, stopping in seventy of the eighty-nine principal cities and towns. Places with strategic importance were visited several times: Milan as the birthplace of Fascism; Turin with its industrial heart; Romagna as Mussolini's birthplace; coastal cities to reinforce the concept of *Mare Nostrum*, and the Pontine Marsh town of Littoria/Latina.⁹⁷ Although they never attained the artistic and poetic standards of Leni Riefenstahl's work, thanks to lavish financing from the State, and the refined technical skill of camera operators and editors, these films remained a dynamic and highly effective propaganda tool.⁹⁸ The reels combined triumphant music, symbols of fasces and Roman eagles, the noise of exultant cheering crowds, and authoritative voiceovers, to transmit an atmosphere of *gravitas*, as if each and every piece of architecture “touched” by the *Duce* took on greater symbolic as well as political importance.⁹⁹ Following the Roman tradition, inaugurations took place on important dates in the Fascist calendar—especially anniversaries and *decennales* that had some relation to the type of building in question. Institutions for war veterans tended to open on the 4th November, while colonial towns like Jimma in Ethiopia inaugurated their *villette* on the anniversary of the March on Rome.¹⁰⁰

Romanità and its rituals also formed the basis of urban decorations set up for official visits, such as those of the Italian Royal Highnesses to Tripoli, Mussolini's visit to Milan, and Hitler's official visits to Rome, Naples and Florence.

96 Data collected by the author from Archivio Storico Luce <http://www.archivioluce.com/archivio/>.

97 Nicoloso (2008), 5–6.

98 Becker (1995), 139.

99 Nicoloso (2008), 6.

100 See Ricotti (1937b).

Exhibitions and Pavilions

Exhibitions and pavilions are situated in the middle ground between architecture and rituals or events, since they acted as a stage for Fascist image politics, where the organic link between historical representation and mimesis was brought into an aesthetic and spatial dimension. These aesthetic visual stimuli were transformed, through the three dimensional space of the exhibition, into a tactile, auditory and emotional experience that struck a balance between sensory-visual stimulation and mental-visual projection.¹⁰¹ This helped to construct a historic imaginary for Fascism that was connected to the ancient world and its practices, and to manifestations of *romanità*, where the past and the present were conflated in order to reach out to the masses.¹⁰²

The space of an exhibition was a highly effective instrument for spreading ideology because it did not, like the façade of a building, necessitate any competition for participation and involvement. Thus, the image of *romanità* had more freedom to manifest itself as a celebration of Fascism. The experience of an exhibition held the same mass appeal as the piazzas pullulating with Blackshirts before the theatrical antics of Mussolini's public speeches, making them an ideal vehicle for propaganda. Fascist exhibitions were mass cultural events, for the most part staged in the principal cities of Rome and Milan, and in other parts of the Fascist Empire, like the Tripoli trade fair that ran annually from 1927 to 1939. Its main aim was to promote economic and cultural exchange between Italy and its African colonies, and the exhibition was dominated by its Rome Pavilions. The 1927 version by Felice Nori acted as an entry point to the fair, and stood as a physical reminder of the "return of Italian Possessions to Rome".¹⁰³ Architecturally, it was a strange pastiche of triumphal arch and garden pavilion, with its over-sized herms and heavily cylindrical double Doric columns. On either side, blank façades stood behind copies of the famous River God statues of the Tiber and the Nile from the Piazza del Campidoglio. Limongelli's 1929 effort, though more streamlined, expressed *romanità* with the usual symbols: the Goddess Rome, the she-wolf, the eagles and the fasces to emphasize Italy's presence in North Africa as a continuation of the ancient past.¹⁰⁴

101 Fogu (2003), 122, 126–128, 143.

102 Fogu (2005), 34.

103 Ciampi, N. "Roma alla prima Fiera coloniale. Tripoli, febbraio-marzo 1927," *Capitolium*, 10 January 1927; cited in McLaren (2002a), 175.

104 McLaren (2002a), 176, 181.

Rome: MRF, MAR, and Circus Maximus

As the *fons et origo* of *romanità*, Rome was the most popular venue for exhibitions—its Palazzo delle Esposizioni on the Via Nazionale held the Quadrennial Arts show, and the famous Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution that ran for a record two years from 1932 to 1934. Of the seventy or so exhibitions held there between 1922 and 1943, nearly forty had a socio-political aim.¹⁰⁵ The ultimate symbol of *romanità* loomed large over the exhibition, with four giant fasces dominating the temporary façade by Libera and De Renzi that covered the neo-Classical (but arguably also Roman) façade by Pio Piacentini. This was reinforced in the interior with the Gallery of Fasces by Futurist artist Mario Sironi, leading to the culminating space of the exhibition: the Martyrs' Shrine, which merged pagan and Christian rituals of remembrance within a mausoleum-type space. As one might expect of the visual culture of this time, these references to the ancient past were effectively used in parallel with cutting-edge immersive exhibition design. The façade followed the same pattern, with two jet black surfaces on either side of an entry marked by a pared-down triumphal arch, and flanked by two-blood red Xs (the Roman numeral for ten).¹⁰⁶ The modern aspects represented the fracture associated with Fascism as a movement, while the Classical elements assured the continuity of Fascism as a regime.¹⁰⁷ At the other end of the spectrum was the Augustan Exhibition of *Romanità* (*Mostra Augustea della Romanità*), held in the same Palazzo in honor of the two-thousandth anniversary of the birth of Augustus. This was the biggest and most comprehensive exhibition of ancient Roman culture to date, which deliberately blurred boundaries between archaeology and ideology.¹⁰⁸ Together with the reconstruction of the Ara Pacis, and the new piazza around the restored Augustan mausoleum, it played an integral role in the conflation of past and present, of Augustus and Mussolini, of *romanità* and Fascism.¹⁰⁹ It sealed the spiritual continuity between ancient Rome and Fascist Rome, between the

105 Pirani, Reho and Siligato (1990).

106 For contemporary accounts of the exhibition see Sarfatti (1933), and a recent re-print of the catalogue: Alfieri and Freddi (2003). For analyses of the exhibition see Ghirardo (1992), Schnapp (1992, 2003), Morello (2004), 306–314 and Gentile (2010).

107 For more on the distinction between Fascism as movement and regime see De Felice (1997), vii, 29.

108 Arthurs (2012), 124. For more detail see: Scriba (1995, 1996a, 1996b); Marcello (2011); Arthurs (2012), 91–125, and Arthurs' chapter in this volume, as well as the following Istituto LUCE newsreels: Gemmiti (1937a) Gemmiti (1937b) and Gemmiti and Franchina (1938).

109 I am joined in this evaluation by Kallis (2011), 823, 830, and Notaro (2002), esp. 64–66.

Roman emperors and the *Duce*, between the Roman Empire and the Fascist Empire.¹¹⁰ The temporary façade by Alfredo Scalpelli echoed both the fasces by Libera and De Renzi and the Arch of Constantine. It included a set of quotations from ancient authors praising various aspects of Roman civilization, translated into Italian to maximize popular appeal. This notion was emphasized in the Istituto Luce newsreels that tracked the progress of the exhibition, documented its inauguration, and chronicled visits by important dignitaries, with much made of the fact that, on his official visit to Rome in May 1937, Hitler made time in his packed itinerary to see it twice.¹¹¹

Four other exhibitions held in Rome's Circus Maximus in the late 1930s also harnessed *romanità* in varying degrees, with a focus on the social and economic aspects of Fascist society.¹¹² The first was dedicated to youth, on whom the future of Fascism depended. The entry, by Libera, was marked by the now iconic metallic fasces, and the inscription "Il numero è potere" (Number is power) was repeated again and again throughout the space of the exhibition, to refer to the procreation policies dear to both Mussolini and Augustus.¹¹³ Two months later, it was the turn of the textile industry. Classical myth was introduced at the outset by referring to women in the factories as the "Penelopes of our times",¹¹⁴

110 Gentile (2010), 143.

111 Marcello (2011), 230–231, 243. For more on Hitler's visit, see Istituto Nazionale Luce (1938), Cresti (1986), 328–335, Marcello (2003) and, most recently, Baxa (2007); also Fortuna's chapter in this volume.

112 Four exhibitions occupied the Circus Maximus almost uninterruptedly from June 1937 to May 1939. These were: the National Exhibition of Summer Colonies and Assistance to Youth (*Mostra Nazionale delle Colonie Estive e dell'Assistenza all'Infanzia*) from 20 June to 26 September 1937; the National Textiles Exhibition (*Mostra del Tessile Nazionale*) from 18 November 1937 to 31 January 1938; the National Afterwork Organization Exhibition (*Mostra Nazionale del Dopolavoro*) from 24 May to 1 September 1938 and the Autarkic Exhibition of Italian Minerals (*Mostra Autarchica del Minerale Italiano*) from 18 November 1938 to 9 May 1939. For a full list of sources on each exhibition see Matitti (1991). See also Kallis (2014).

113 In the early thirties, the PNF imposed taxes on bachelors, while large families were given prizes and received at Palazzo Venezia by the *Duce* in person at a special ceremony. They also enjoyed passes to travel free on public transport, low-rent housing and loans at negligible interest rates; cf. Venè (1988), 164–165. The inscription was placed on the trabeated section of the main exhibition buildings under reproductions of the roundels by Andrea della Robbia on the portico of Brunelleschi's Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence (1427) which looked after the welfare of orphans. For images of the exhibition see Ricotti (1937a) and for a contemporary architectural analysis see Pagano (1937).

114 Biadene (1937).

and reinforced architecturally with parabolic arches that enclosed the exhibition's winter garden with "magisterial simplicity."¹¹⁵ The Afterwork Exhibition that opened the following year expressed *romanità* through the use of Classical statuary and murals, and a central pavilion that re-created the *impluvium* of a Roman *domus*, bordered by sixteen statues of athletes, and providing an evocative view of the ruins on the Palatine. The exhibition on Italian minerals featured the most overtly Roman element, with the Autarky, Inventions and Research pavilion by Ernesto Puppo and Annibale Vitellozzi. It acted as a climactic focus for the exhibition's central avenue, and the façade featured an enormous eagle bas-relief above the inscription "Mussolini is always right".¹¹⁶ The themes of these four exhibitions thus constituted a kind of "theme park" of Fascism that was reinforced by the spectacular backdrop of the imperial palace and its physical location along a ceremonial route between two of the city's "fatal" hills (the Palatine and the Aventine).¹¹⁷

Milan: The Triennale

Northern Italy hosted its own type of exhibitions, dedicated to Industrial and Decorative arts, which were held from the late 1920s in Monza, and throughout the 1930s in Milan. They stand as testimony to the modern culture of the ephemeral, and became veritable laboratories of modernism, supposedly free from the heavy-handed Classicism more prevalent in Rome.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, *romanità* remained present as a guiding principle for modern architecture. The modern housing exhibitions displayed examples of the latest materials and planning approaches alongside Mediterranean villas and holiday homes covered with pediments.¹¹⁹ Visitors were presented with the modernity of rational layouts, curtain walls of glass, and floors of smooth, brightly colored linoleum, alongside murals, mosaics and statues recalling the Roman past, or exhibits extolling the virtues of Vitruvius' treatise. In a fair marked by contrast, the horizontal symmetry and rarefied arches of the Palazzo dell'Arte by Muzio sat alongside Ponti's Torre Littoria, a steel-framed tower that provided a panorama over the city, and was surrounded by the experimental forays into new ways of

¹¹⁵ Pica (1938), 15.

¹¹⁶ For more images, see Longo (1939), 214–216. For propaganda uses of the Circus Maximus see Kallis (2014).

¹¹⁷ Stone (1999), 219.

¹¹⁸ Curtis (2008), 29.

¹¹⁹ See also Avon (2004), 172–176.

living proposed by the younger generation (Figure 13.11).¹²⁰ The interiors of the Palazzo housed Sironi's first large-scale foray into the revival of the noble arts of ancient Rome, with over 1,000 square meters of murals, bas-reliefs and mosaics. Their conscious employment in the service of Party interests was also part of a campaign to establish Italian supremacy in their revival.¹²¹ Roman-style statuary was also featured in the exhibitions and interiors, such as Arturo Martini's famous Vittoria dell'Aria, which was given pride of place in the Aeronautics Exhibition of 1934, or the Apollo-like violinist in the House of the Artist at the Milan Triennale of 1936.

The contemporary Italian architecture exhibition aimed to demonstrate the development of Italian architecture from 1933 to 1936. It was divided into ten sections, organized by region, and displayed more than 140 works by over 200 architects, with modern buildings outnumbering the more traditional ones by roughly ten to one. Overall, the work demonstrated the subtle employment of *romanità* through unique relationships between rhythm and mass, use of materials, and understanding of construction techniques. This was determined through a natural absorption of Italy's singular artistic climate, which was unique to the Italian spirit.¹²²

Other exhibits, like the Coherence Room (*Sala della coerenza*) by BBPR, opened the Housing part of the Exhibitions with their own interpretation of a Classical genealogy. One of its panels declared: "The Parthenon expresses the clarity of Greek thought. The structure of the Colosseum is within that same realm of ideas proper to the Roman world: hierarchy and unity. Byzantine art manifests a Barbarian aspiration towards the Classical ... Neo-Classical architecture of the Napoleonic era is the coherent expression of a scenographic nostalgia of order and empire."¹²³

A modern (but essentially Greek) interpretation of Classical ideals was encapsulated in the *Salone d'Onore* (re-named after the invasion of Ethiopia as *Salone della Vittoria*), a kind of "throne-room, in the shape of a temple"¹²⁴ created for the sixth exhibition of 1936 by the architect-artist team of Marcello

120 Bona (2004), 156. See also Avon (2004), 172–177.

121 Letter from Giulio Barella to Mussolini dated 12 June 1933. ACS SPDCO B231f. 1809.

122 Piacentini (1936), 7. Completed between 1933 and 1936, the works shown were chosen by a committee comprising Giulio Barella (Triennale President), Marcello Piacentini and Alberto Calza Bini (Triennale Board of Directors), Giovanni Michelucci and Gio Ponti (National Syndicate of Fascist Architects), Carlo Felice, Mario Sironi, Giuseppe Pagano, Agnoldomenico Pica (Organizing Committee of the 6th exhibition).

123 Pagano (1936), 10.

124 Curtis (2008), 35.

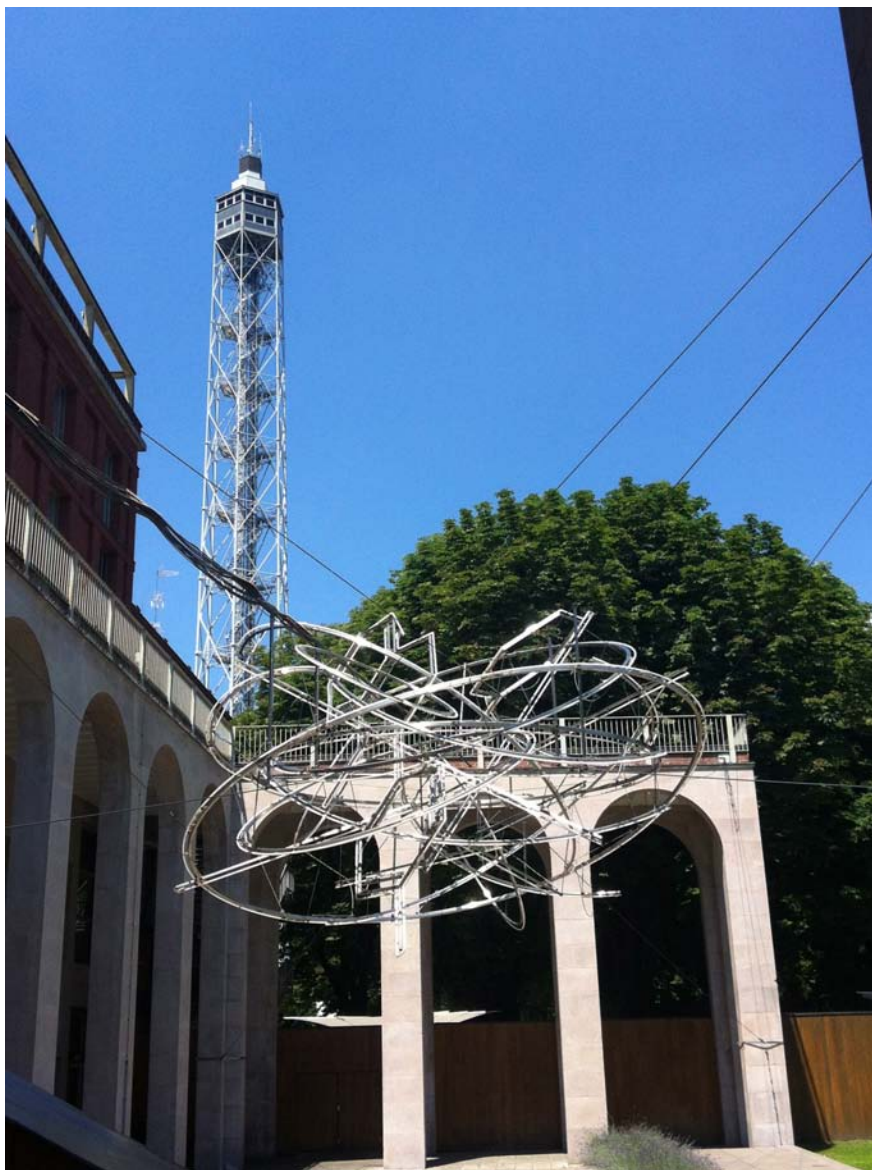


FIGURE 13.11 *Gio Ponti, Torre Littoria and Giovanni Muzio, Palazzo dell'Arte, Milan Triennale, 1933*

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Nizzoli, Giancarlo Palanti, Edoardo Persico and Lucio Fontana. It was located on the first floor of the Palazzo dell'Arte, and had multiple entrance points. A dualistic chromatic effect of vertical bands stretching from floor to ceiling gave a heavily abstract interpretation of the play of light and dark achieved in the colonnades of Greek temples, thus evoking "the ghost of the Parthenon".¹²⁵ Its monumentality was intentional, and was achieved not through extensive decoration or formal gravity, but by the "principle of the colonnade" and by "the two fundamental elements of modern architecture: the practical one which is concerned with serial construction and the second, aesthetic, one that operates on the plane of expressionism."¹²⁶ The Roman influence was conveyed through the artworks created for the room: five portraits of ancient Roman *condottieri*, and a large female figure in mid-stride, followed by two rampant horses. Nizzoli's portraits of Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Trajan and Constantine were taken from photographs of ancient busts, and re-presented in cement intarsia bas-reliefs.¹²⁷ These had the chiaroscuro qualities of the types of large-grained black and white photograph used in propaganda material,¹²⁸ with the implication that Mussolini, the contemporary *Dux*, was their rightful heir. Fontana's plaster group was initially intended to represent "Today's Heroic Italy", but was later reconfigured as a wingless Victory to celebrate the new imperial climate.

Naples—Oltremare

Finally, Naples was the site of the short-lived Colonial Exhibition (*Mostra Triennale delle Terre Italiane d'Oltremare*). Chosen for its strategic position on the coast, it helped to embody Italy's expansionist ambitions across the seas.¹²⁹ Planned as a colonial version of the even shorter-lived Rome Expo of 1942 (EUR—see the following chapter) it was supposed, on the one hand, to celebrate the glory of the Italian empire across the Mediterranean and into Africa

¹²⁵ Giolli (1936), 18.

¹²⁶ Triennale di Milano (1936), 127–128. The text accompanying the original competition entry was also published in the February 1935 edition of *Casabella*. For a full English translation see Curtis (2008), 29–30.

¹²⁷ Triennale di Milano (1936), 127.

¹²⁸ Curtis (2008), 34.

¹²⁹ The Fair was originally intended to occupy over one million square meters with thirty-six pavilions, an office building, an open air theater to seat 10,000 people, two theaters, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, restaurants and cafés, an amusement park, a zoo, a tropical aquarium and an archaeological area; cf. Lucarelli (2005).

and, on the other, to promote the urban development of south-western Naples towards the coast. Suggested by the *Duce* in 1936, it was inaugurated on 9 May 1940 (the fourth anniversary of the Declaration of Empire), and closed just one month later upon Italy's entry into World War II.¹³⁰ Designed by a team of architects including Marcello Canino and Luigi Piccinato, the expo's overall plan recalled both Piccinato's previous plan of Sabaudia, and the colonies of the ancient Roman empire. One of its north-south axes (*cardo*) linked a monumental exedra to the exhibition's principal pavilion via an avenue of spectacular fountains, while the second, named Viale dell'Autarchia, took visitors through exhibits dedicated to the latest modern achievements of the regime. Its east-west cross-axes (*decumanus*) were named Viale dell'Impero and Viale 23 Marzo to commemorate the founding of the Fascist Party, while the third led east-west axis visitors through the entry gates and across the Piazza Roma before entering the Piazza Mussolini/Impero. These spaces, together with the principal pavilion, had the important job of encapsulating *romanità*, and were dominated by statues of triumphs and Victories and the Fascist Party Tower. The façades of the pavilions were covered in panels with frescoes depicting epic voyages and conquests, scenes from the *Aeneid*, bas-reliefs of what appear to be battle scenes, and quotations from Polybius' *Histories*.¹³¹ On the inside was a Hall dedicated to the Caesars, and an overtly propagandistic map of the Empire, accompanied by more Polybius, and a phrase by Mussolini that made further reference to the *Mare Nostrum* concept. Most of the pavilions that were intended to be permanent exhibited a Rationalist expression, with suitable influences from colonial architecture, and were built of reinforced concrete and glass bricks. The arena, on the other hand, was decorated with mosaics by Nicola Fabbricatore showing rather clumsily-executed naked youths engaged in various forms of battle, hunting and wrestling, while the Palazzo dell'Arte was heavily frescoed and flanked by stark Doric columns. *Romanità* was also in evidence at the Fair through the serendipitous discovery on the northern edge of the site of a section of the ancient Via Puteolana (connecting Naples to Pozzuoli), an aqueduct and bath complex. Like the recent excavations at Ostia and Herculaneum, these acted as a direct testimony to ancient Roman civilization, and helped to legitimate the new empire.¹³²

130 Stenti and Cappiello (1998), 116.

131 Capobianco (1998) and Lucarelli (2005).

132 Stenti and Cappiello (1998), 128.

Italy's World Expo Pavilions

Italian Pavilions at International Expositions also exported manifestations of *romanità* to a world-wide audience. The pavilions at Chicago 1933, Brussels 1935, Paris 1937 and New York 1939 trace an aesthetic line from the aero-dynamic forms of streamlined *moderne* to the monumental forms of academic Classicism (Figure 13.12). The pavilions for Chicago and Brussels were designed by Libera and De Renzi. Fresh from their success with the façade of the Exhibition of Fascist Revolution, they took *romanità* to a new level of pure symbolism with their over-sized and over-stylized *fascio*, which showed how firmly Fascism's new society was anchored to the past. Michele Busiri Vici's effort for New York 1939 represents the other end of the spectrum, and clearly illustrates the notion that Fascist authority, in the face of declining consent to the alliance with Hitler and imminent entry into World War II, relied more and more on Classicism as a legitimizing symbol, in proportion to the vulnerability of its authority.¹³³ The pavilion acted as an architectural throne for the Goddess Roma, with a monumental fountain flowing down between two over-scaled and heavily-colonnaded porticoes. The Paris effort was able to communicate successfully the unity of the Fascist state, where Italy presented herself as the cool, open Mediterranean answer to totalitarian rule in Europe. A successful collaboration between Pagano and Piacentini, it brought Italy's unique brand of Classicism onto the international stage. Considered by critics of the time as either Terragni's Casa del Fascio turned on its side, or the great colonnaded façade of the third-century Septizodium, it combined modern building methods and exhibition techniques with the harmony, rhythm and proportions of Classical principles.¹³⁴ Each pavilion intended to present Fascism on the global stage, and each pavilion allowed Italy to stake its unique claim to the Classical tradition.

Conclusion

Although the relationship between Rationalism and *romanità* has often been fraught with questions about which style or form was more "Fascist", the question, as has been demonstrated above, is deeper and more complex. Buildings are not mere ingredients in the fabric of the city, which stand alone as

¹³³ Dovey (2007), 14.

¹³⁴ Marcello (2015).



FIGURE 13.12 *Italy's four pavilions: Italian Pavilions by Adalberto Libera and Mario De Renzi at Chicago 1933 and Brussels 1935; at Paris 1937 by Marcello Piacentini and Giuseppe Pagano, and at New York 1939 by Michele Busiri-Vici*
SOURCE: ARCHITETTURA

autonomous expressions of a style or aesthetic—they are mediators and communicators of their society's power structures, acting upon the perception and experience of those who walk past or enter them. This is achieved on a direct level via their form, proportion and location within civic space, which determines both their visibility and their mode of entrance and approach. On a detailed level, this is reinforced by stylistic elements, materials, and lettering. They are deeply embedded in citizens' daily lives, both defining and shaping the urban space around them, and functioning as backdrops for the events and rituals that take place in these public spaces. Buildings also enclose the spaces where either unstructured daily life or defined rituals take place—and although these can be more private, Fascist propaganda was able to introduce itself even into the domestic realm by means of the radio, uniforms and school-books. The power of architecture was further amplified through the diffusion of its image via the rituals and events constructed around its creation, and disseminated via the channels of mass media—in particular the newsreel. *Romanità* in architecture was thus interwoven with the discourse of power, and was used to serve the Fascist cause—whether as an object in the city possessing an obvious *gravitas* of form and symmetry, such as the *Palazzi di Giustizia* of Milan or Messina; as an element defining public space, such as the porticoes and towers around the central town *piazze* of Brescia, Genova or Littoria/Latina; as frames for everyday (structured) leisure, such as the *Casa Balilla* or the *Dopolavoro*, or even as part of private domestic life, as in the idealized interiors of the Milan Triennale.

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Forma urbis Mussolini: Vision and Rhetoric in the Designs for Fascist Rome*

Flavia Marcello

Introduction

Many social, political and economic forces act to shape cities. In Fascist era Rome, these forces were channeled by politicians, planners, architects and urban designers, who devised plans and realized visions in response to the rhetoric of *romanità* that pervaded society. *Romanità* was thus expressed through built forms and civic space to build consent and bring legitimation to the Fascist regime.

This chapter considers the ways in which vision and rhetoric were first expressed in plans for the city, and then put into practice by politicians and archaeologists through the demolition and destruction of selected areas of the old Rome to create the stage for a new Rome: the *Forma urbis mussolini*. Mussolini saw himself as the architect of a “vast, ordered and powerful” city; the dark centuries of decadence would be swept away so that the monuments of history could, like the sole dictator himself, “stand like giants in their necessary solitude”.¹ Rome’s architects and urban designers took Mussolini’s *monitum* and presented a series of development plans in order to make his ideas a ‘concrete’ reality.

The redevelopment of Rome throughout the 1920s and 1930s was intended to construct a Third (Fascist) Rome that incorporated selected elements of the First Rome—that of the Empire, and more specifically Augustus—and the Second Rome—that of Christianity and its principal autocrat, the Pope.² The systematic gutting of the city center created a series of large-scale urban spaces

* I would like to thank my Roman colleagues Dr. Francesca de Caprariis of the Musei Capitolini and Professor Paul Gwynne for their help and advice on the archaeological and Classical elements of this chapter. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Italian are by the author. Chapter 13 of this volume deals specifically with how the myth of *romanità* pervaded urban space at a more architectural level.

1 Mussolini (1925).

2 Kostof (1973).

where the theatre of consent could be played out. In some cases, new, Fascist monuments would be inserted into this framework to create the Third Rome of Fascism, although, like the New Party Headquarters (the *Palazzo Littorio*) and the Danteum, these were never built.³ In spite of these plans and their realization, Rome's past identities and the spatial practices of everyday citizens persisted, leading Mussolini to build an idealized version of Fascist Rome on the outskirts of the city. It would be born from the permanent architecture and infrastructure of the planned Rome International Exposition of 1942.⁴ With the fall of the regime and the end of the Second World War, that vision was also thwarted, and today it houses the monumental ghosts of a past ideal.

Romanità and the City

Throughout the *ventennio fascista*, *Romanità* acted in varying degrees as a powerful force behind Fascism's will to power and empire. Rome is mentioned throughout the *Italian Encyclopedia's* definition of Fascism, as an integral part of its myth. Fascists dreamt of "a Roman Italy, that is an Italy that is wise and strong, disciplined and imperial. A large part of the immortal spirit of Rome is reborn in Fascism: the lictors are Roman, our military organization is Roman, our pride and courage are Roman".⁵ This did not necessarily mean a return to the past. The past was presented and synthesized in a consciously elided form as a paradigm for the future; or, as Marla Stone has so aptly put it, it was mobilized.⁶ The past was employed as a regenerative force for the present, in order to make the future secure.⁷ *Romanitas/Romanità* was at the same time past, present and future; as a historical period of unmatched cultural unity and military prowess, the ancient Roman past provided an ideal recruit for the Fascist Party's efforts to recreate the same atmosphere.⁸ This cross-temporal concept of *romanità* lay at the root of Fascism's historical imaginary,⁹

3 For more on what Fascism did *not* build in Rome see Kallis (2011a).

4 The story of the E42 has been told many times, and the most comprehensive document remains Calvesi, Guidoni and Lux (1987). For shorter overviews see, for example, Ciucci (1989), Fuller (1996) and Ciucci and Muratore (2004), 407–414.

5 Mussolini (1932). Although signed by Mussolini it is commonly understood that the author of the text is Fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile.

6 Nelis (2007), 409; Griffin (2007), 232; Stone (1999), 205.

7 Griffin (1998).

8 Stone (1999), 206, 215.

9 Fogu (2003).

and it underpinned the regime's social and economic policies. It was reified in myriad forms, from stylized columns to grand avenues, from postage stamps to letterheads, from the *passo romano* to the Fascist salute, right down to the very symbol of the Party: the lictoral fasces (*fascio littorio*). Throughout the 1930s, academic conferences and publications, radio transmissions, newsreels, movies and newspaper articles bombarded the Italian citizenry with constant reminders of their Imperial heritage. Horace was hailed as the poet of *romanità trionfante* ('triumphant Roman-ness'), while the golden age of Augustus' *Pax Romana* was seen as providing the foundations of the future glory of the Fascist empire.¹⁰

Here we will see how such concepts of *romanità* took form as an entity within the city of Rome: as a complex network of urban spaces, and the representational forces that they generated. This network includes the visions and rhetoric of planners and politicians, and the demolition and destruction enacted by bureaucrats and archaeologists, all acting under the aegis of *romanità*. Thus, the *fons et origo* of *romanità*—the city of Rome itself—was formed and molded to fit Mussolini's image. It was not necessarily an "authentic" city, but one reinvented by the regime through the manipulation of its urban fabric and public spaces.¹¹ What Mussolini referred to as "our history" was created by erasing the architectural and urban testimony of the centuries between the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, and between the Renaissance and the Fascist Era.¹² He wanted to "edit" the city to fit his palingenetic aspirations, and to achieve that, he needed to extend totalitarian rule over the city of Rome by appointing a governor to rule the city "spiritually and materially in its past and in its future."¹³ If palingenesis as a doctrine of rebirth is understood in the sense of physical renewal, this was enacted via the monuments of ancient Rome, with the inclusion of selected representatives from the Renaissance and *Risorgimento* eras. Mussolini wanted to create a new sense of time, focusing on the First and Second "Romes", to which he would add his "Third Rome"—the architectural and urban reification of a new, utopian society.¹⁴ As the newspapers of the time announced: "After the Rome of Augustus and the Rome of Sixtus v [we will build] the Rome of Mussolini".¹⁵

10 Boni, (1993).

11 Nicoloso (2011), 34.

12 Mussolini (1925).

13 Mussolini (1925).

14 Griffin (1998).

15 "Il piano regolatore dell'Urbe nei rilievi della stampa romana," *Il popolo d'Italia*, 29 January 1931, cited in Nicoloso (2011), 38. See also Arthurs (2012), 55.

Mussolini's transformation of Rome also needs to be considered in the context of an arc of time that spans more than twenty years. The *ventennio* of Fascism was not a uniform era. To better understand the journey of the city's transformation and the rhetorical project constructed around it, the era needs to be articulated into phases.¹⁶

The first phase runs from 28 October 1922, the March on Rome, when Mussolini was given the power to rule by King Victor Emanuel III, to the effective establishment of totalitarian rule sparked by the murder of the Communist deputy Giacomo Matteotti in June 1924. *Romanità* was on the *Duce's* mind, but it had not yet gained sufficient force to drive the transformation of an entire city. The second period runs from June 1924 to March 1929, when Mussolini consolidated his dictatorship via a "plebiscite". This period is marked by the consolidation of power based on social, spatial and physical infrastructure. Visions of the new Rome entered the public arena, with architects and planners presenting both official and unofficial plans for its transformation.

The third period stretches from the late twenties to the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, when the Fascist state was (literally) built. It marks the zenith of consent to the regime, and coincides with the tenth anniversary of Fascism. The lead-up to this event, with Mussolini's express desire to present a worthy city to overseas visitors, made this the most intense period of transformation and demolition.¹⁷ During this time, the city's new regulatory plan was designed, approved and converted into law, the Capitoline Hill was isolated, the major imperial forums were excavated and reconstructed, and a grand avenue connecting Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum came into being—the Via dell'Impero. Other important nuclei of the new Fascist Rome were a City of Learning—the new university (*Città Universitaria*, 1932–1935), and a City of Sport (*Foro Mussolini*, begun in 1928).

The fourth period, marked by Empire and militarism, begins in 1935–1936 with the Ethiopian campaign, and ends in 1941 with Italy's entry into World War II alongside her new ally, Nazi Germany. The militaristic and imperial atmosphere gave more space to the myth of *romanità*, as it shifted from periphery to center within the realm of propaganda.¹⁸ The city's transformation became crucial to turning it into a backdrop for the theater of consent, hosting major events such as the Bimillennial of Augustus and Hitler's state visit. Hitler's

16 In order to trace variations in Fascist ritual, Mabel Berezin has divided the regime into five periods, which will also be used here; Berezin (1997), 36–37.

17 ACS, SPDCO, B842. Also in Vannelli (1981), 247.

18 Griffin (2007), 222.

itinerary was carefully planned to take him along the wide straight boulevards that he so loved, past the great urban and architectural achievements of the regime.¹⁹ Projects with greater monumental and scenographic value were swiftly completed: the isolation of the Augustan mausoleum, the *sventramenti* (demolitions, or literally ‘gutting’) involved in the creation of Corso Rinascimento (parallel to Piazza Navona), the widening of Via delle Botteghe Oscure (behind Piazza Venezia) and the continued demolitions in preparation for Via della Conciliazione, whose clear and unequivocal urban statement celebrated the re-union of State and Church; the centuries-old plans to connect the biggest Temple of Christianity to the Tiber would finally be realized by Fascism.²⁰

The last phase of the regime ends with the fall of Mussolini in July 1943; a time when the urban spaces of Mussolini’s Rome were left vacant, and the resistance movement gained strength in those private spaces where the regime’s gaze could not reach.

La nuova Roma and Her Artifices

No discussion of the making of Fascist Rome can ignore Mussolini’s famous speech “La nuova Roma” (the New Rome), addressed to the city’s first governor, Filippo Cremonesi (1872–1942). This speech is a watershed in the history of Rome’s urban planning and development, for it ordained the governor of Rome, and at the same time acted as a “call to arms” for urban transformation. In October 1925 (the 28th, to be precise) Rome ceased to be a municipality led by an elected mayor, and became a governorate. Mussolini announced to the Grand Council of Fascism that this was the only way for the Fascist government to present its country with a truly imperial capital.²¹ The municipality of Rome was ruled by a governor, two vice-governors, and a secretary, who together wielded full and unconditional power. All hand-picked by the Party hierarchy, their decisions were immediately effective, and they answered directly to the Minister for the Interior, who, from November 1926, just happened to be Mussolini.²² All the Governors, except former education Minister Giuseppe Bottai,

19 Baxa (2007), 234. See also Arthurs in this volume.

20 For a concise reading of the history and politics around Via della Conciliazione, see Kirk (2006), Kallis (2012) and Kallis (2014), 123–130.

21 Cited in Cederna (1979), 48.

22 Marcello (2001), 76. For laws and royal decrees concerning the governorate see: L no. 1949, 28/10/1925; RD no. 2240, 9/12/1925 and RD no. 2702, 6/12/1928. See also Insolera (2011), 127–128; Arthurs (2012), 53–54 and Painter (2005), 5.

were aristocrats, and all were committed, in varying degrees, to the vision and rhetoric of *romanità*. Cremonesi, for example, wrote: “We are Roman because we are citizens of Rome. But we are all Roman from one end of the peninsula to the other.”²³ Bottai, on the other hand, saw the value of *romanità* in its capacity to inspire present action, rather than residing in the pages of dead history.²⁴ Thus, the governors were instrumental in putting into practice large-scale demolition projects thrusting their way through the archaeological heart of the city, and the city capital was “fascistized”. The *sventramenti* approved by the governors were often projects such as Via della Conciliazione that dated back to the 17th century, and had remained on the drawing board partly due to financial constraints, and partly because Rome lacked the legislative and bureaucratic structures to put them into practice.²⁵ The governorate was an essential instrument in the realization of the Ideal Fascist City. It could not have been achieved, if not through the “pawns of the Supreme Commander.”²⁶ These pawns shared this “chessboard” with Queens, Bishops and Rooks: the archaeologists, ministers and bureaucrats of the Governorate. Our knights were architects such as Antonio Calza Bini, president of the Institute for Popular Housing (ICP) and the National Fascist Syndicate of Architects (SNAF), archaeologist Antonio Muñoz, superintendent of Fine Arts and Archaeology, and planner Virgilio Testa, Governorate Secretary. Muñoz, in particular, carried out a pivotal role in the *sventramento* of Rome and, as an expert, made the final decision as to which buildings should be demolished. His unconquerable presumption, newly-found passion for ancient monuments and *romanità*, and his phenomenal efficiency, meant that Mussolini was able to inaugurate a new and more grandiose street, or a newly excavated and restored monument, on each of the important anniversaries of the Fascist calendar.²⁷

Although Mussolini’s speech “La nuova Roma” is the most quoted text on the transformation of Rome during the Fascist period, it has not yet received proper exegetical attention, and is therefore quoted here in full:

23 Cremonesi (1925–1926), 393.

24 Griffin (2007), 222.

25 For an overview of 19th-century Rome and its relationship to *romanità*, see Arthurs (2012), 9–15. For a list of *sventramenti* previously planned and then adopted into Mussolini’s Rome, see Insolera (2011), 50, 137.

26 From Boncompagni’s inauguration speech, 19 September 1928, quoted in Margiotta Broglio (1969), 709.

27 Cederna (1979), xix.

Governor!

Before you lies a period of at least five years to complete what is begun, and to commence the major works of the second period [of Rome's transformation].

My ideas are clear, my orders are precise. I am more than certain they will become concrete reality. In five years, Rome must appear to all peoples of the world: vast, ordered, powerful, as it was in the times of Augustus' first empire.

You will continue to free the great oak from all that still overshadows it. You will create space around the Augustan Mausoleum, the Theatre of Marcellus, the Capitoline, the Pantheon. Everything that has grown in the centuries of decadence must disappear. In five years, the Pantheon, thanks to a large opening, must be visible from Piazza Colonna. You will also free the majestic temples of Christian Rome from the parasitic and profane constructions around them. The thousand-year-old monuments of our own history must stand like giants in their necessary solitude.

In this way the Third Rome will expand over other hills, along the banks of the sacred river, down to the beaches of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

[...] A straight road, which must be the longest and the widest in the world, will bring the fullness of our seas [*mare nostrum*] from the resurrected Ostia to the heart of the city where the Unknown [Soldier] watches over us. (*Prolonged ovation*).²⁸

Embedded in the speech are numerous direct and indirect references to *romanità*. First of all, the conviction that Rome would be “vast, ordered and powerful as it was in the times of Augustus' first empire”. The reference to Augustus is direct; to call it his first empire alludes to the Fascist era heralding a second Augustan empire, with Mussolini in the role of the 20th century's *princeps pacis*.²⁹ Rome is referred to as a great oak—a reference to the civic crown of oak leaves given to Octavian when he was granted the name Augustus by the Senate.³⁰ The monuments named next are all directly or indirectly connected to Augustus. Churches in general are briefly mentioned, but St. Peter's, that other monument so representative of Rome, is not. Symbolizing the Rome of the Popes, it would take on more significance a few years later, after the Lateran

²⁸ Mussolini (1925).

²⁹ Wilkins (2005), 54.

³⁰ *Res gestae divi augusti* 34 and Ovid *Fasti* 1, 603–616.

Pacts of 1929, which cemented ties between Fascism and the Catholic church with plans for the Via della Conciliazione, which was in fact completed for the 1950 Holy Year. Any part of Rome that did not fit this image was described as “parasitic and profane”—those parts of Rome that belong to the centuries of decadence—essentially construed as the medieval period and, more recently, the anti-monarchical or Socialist elements of the liberal state, with the exception of the 19th-century monument to Victor Emanuel II, the *Vittoriano*. Some respect at least was due to him, given that his grandson Victor Emanuel III had handed over power to Mussolini after the March on Rome. Secondly, and more importantly, it housed the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the *Ignoto* who “watches over us”. Although placed there in 1920 by ex-servicemen, the Tomb was quickly co-opted by the Party propaganda machine to serve broader militaristic and nationalistic ends.³¹ The reference to *mare nostrum* moves beyond the boundaries of Rome as a city, and begins to refer to Rome as an empire. It also alludes to the Via del Mare, which would make its way to the coast through another substantial area of demolition and archaeological reconstruction: the *Forum Boarium*, before continuing around the Circus Maximus, past the Baths of Caracalla, and on to Ostia, “resurrected” both as an archaeological site and as an area for new suburban development.

Mussolini’s vision for Rome was far more than just the subject of this speech; it was a long-standing obsession.³² The seed of the idea of transforming Rome into the political and spiritual capital of a new Fascist empire was sown in Mussolini’s mind by the art critic and intellectual Margherita Sarfatti.³³ On private nocturnal tours of the city, they discussed the symbolic power of Roman history, and the ways in which modernity could be woven into it to give a new aspect to tradition.³⁴ In 1925, the official governorate publication *Capitolium* published a compendium of Mussolini’s thoughts regarding Rome, and the necessity of changing its image from a city of “room-renters and good-for-nothings” to a city that could once more fulfill its destiny as the “sign of universal civilization.”³⁵ To paraphrase Joseph Campbell, the mythic consciousness of *romanità* provided the substratum of the “modern” human experience

31 For a history of the Monument see Kirk (2005), 231–239. For its treatment as an element of the Third Rome see Kallis (2012), 47–50.

32 Painter (2005), 3–5. For a comprehensive overview of the presence of *romanità* throughout the corpus of Mussolini’s speeches see Nelis (2007).

33 Cannistraro and Sullivan (1993), 315.

34 Cannistraro and Sullivan (1993), 315, 322.

35 Bacchiani (1925–1926), 387, 389.

of Fascism.³⁶ Mussolini's references to an eternal past, and his teleological references to a pre-destined future, negated the space of death, and were based on his interpretations of Nietzsche and Sorel.³⁷

Vision and Rhetoric: *Romanità* in the Mind of the Architects and *Urbanisti*

Vision and rhetoric were one thing; their actual realization quite another. For Fascist Rome to strengthen its image of *romanità*, a plan was needed, and a number of these were developed by Rome's architects and urban designers throughout the 1920s and 1930s.³⁸ Both Armando Brasini's *Urbe Massima* and Marcello Piacentini's *La Grande Roma* were designed well before the advent of Fascism, and celebrated their own visions of *romanità*. In the first decades of the 20th century, Rome was enjoying a relative period of stasis after the "fever" and "crisis" brought about by the nomination of the city as the nation's capital in 1870 (Figure 14.1).³⁹ After hearing the *Nuova Roma* speech, Brasini and Piacentini updated their proposals so that they could more accurately reflect overall Fascist rhetoric, while at the same time accommodating the *Duce's* specific directives. The *Programma Urbanistico di Roma* by the *Gruppo Urbanisti Romani*, and the project by the *Burbera* group, were presented at the International Federation of Housing and Town Planning conference, held in Rome in September 1929 to address the needs of an ancient city undergoing rapid transformation. Both drew on the latest developments in planning practice, and were also informed by the city's acknowledged Classical identity.

Brasini's "Urbe massima"

The *Dea Roma* had long held Brasini in her spell; his work was conceived in homage to her, and the man and his work should be considered in this light. Modernity in all its forms certainly passed Brasini by, and both his architectural and urban designs are known for their monumentality, their nostalgic homage to an idealized past, and their straight-laced academic Classicism. Their shared passion for *romanità* prompted Sarfatti to present Brasini to the *Duce*, and for a short time he enjoyed a privileged position as Mussolini's favorite archi-

36 Griffin (1998).

37 Griffin (1998).

38 For an account of the discipline of urban planning (*urbanistica*) see Ernesti (1988b), esp. 168–173, and Sernini (1988).

39 Insolera (2011), 69–79, 114–123.



FIGURE 14.1 *Aerial view of Rome before the Fascist period—Umberto Nistri*
COURTESY OF THE ISTITUTO DI STUDI ROMANI

tect.⁴⁰ His *Urbe Massima* plan dates to 1916, and it combined his earlier projects for the Flaminio and Piazza d'Armi quarters, envisaged as grand centers for future urban development.⁴¹

40 De Felice (1997), 12; Cannistraro and Sullivan (1993), 315–316, 320–321.

41 For more on Brasini and his work see Gresleri (1993), 372–373, Raffo Pani (1969), 64–66, and Fontana (1999), 104–105.

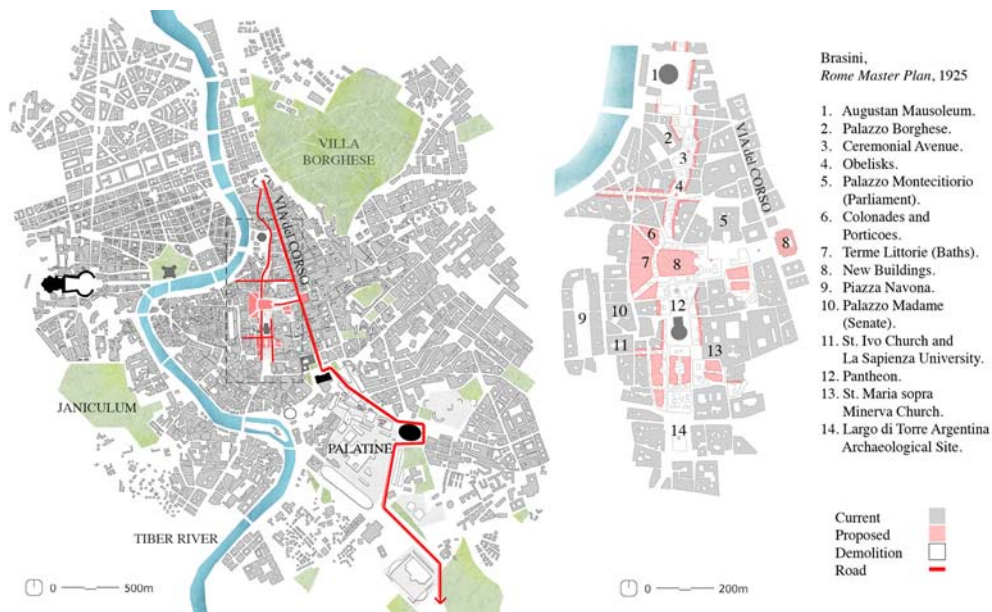


FIGURE 14.2 Brasini, Rome master plan, 1925, and detailed plan of Rinascimento quarter
MAP BY BRANDON GARDINER

The plan was overtly monumental, and the demolition necessary for its realization was brutal. Brasini intended to carve a void out of Rome's center between Via del Corso and the Tiber; any structure not deemed to be "monumental" was to be razed to the ground, leaving a vacuum bordered by porticoes, and punctuated by a plethora of Classical elements: rows of columns, imperial eagles and obelisks (see Figure 14.2). This vast piazza, to be named the *Foro Mussolini*, would contain baths in the Roman style and would be traversed by a forty-metre wide avenue connecting the Pantheon to the Augustan Mausoleum and Piazzale Flaminio, just outside Piazza del Popolo (see Figure 14.3). The rest of the city was conceived as possessing five distinct expressions of Rome's urban legacies: the old Imperial and Papal Rome, Modern Rome to the north, Agricultural Rome to the south, Bourgeois Rome to the east, and Catholic Rome to the west in the form of the Vatican City.⁴² When his proposal for the new Piazza Colonna was published in the Governorate journal *Capitolium*, It was described as "a modern monumental center in the heart of the old Rome, with wide open spaces, where the praiseworthy monuments of the past are adequately framed and placed in a position of greater prominence." (Figure 14.3)⁴³

42 Brasini (1979), 98. For the entire *Urbe massima* plan, see Orano (1917).

43 "Progetto della sistemazione del centro di Roma", *Capitolium* 1, (1925–1926), 32.

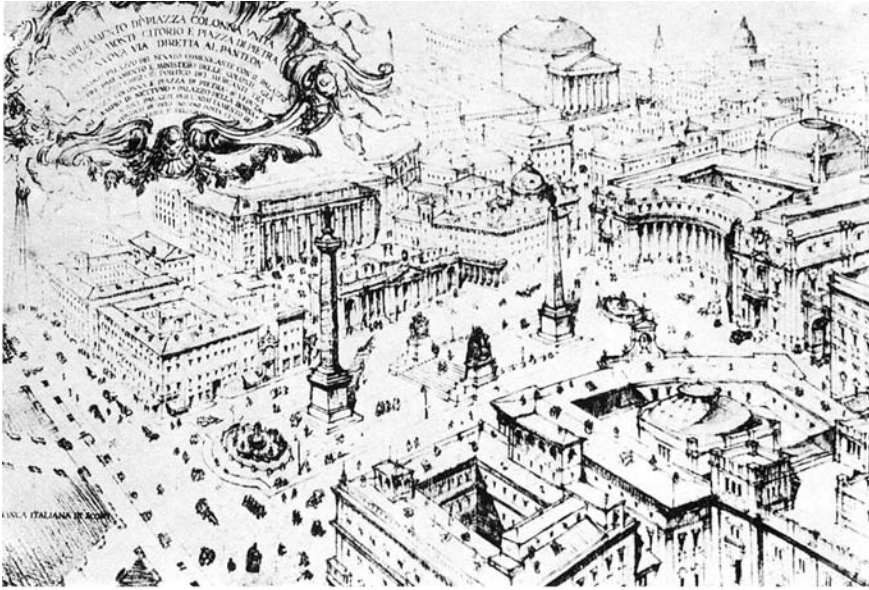


FIGURE 14.3 *Brasini, Rome master plan, 1925. Perspective view of Piazza Colonna united with Piazza Montecitorio and Piazza di Pietra and direct road to the Pantheon FROM CAPITOLIUM, COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY LIBRARY, ROME*

When Brasini submitted his plan to Mussolini, he declared it to be “in line with the overall instructions announced by me in the Campidoglio at the end of ’25 ... [its] buildings ... represent—in their architecture—the signs of the Fascist times.”⁴⁴ He approved it in principle, and requested that the necessary steps be speedily taken to put it into practice—up until 1928, it seemed that it would actually be built. However, Brasini’s plan was rejected as suddenly as it was adopted: this may have been for purely financial reasons, because Piacentini talked Mussolini out of it, or because he simply decided to wait for a more favorable occasion.⁴⁵ Extreme as they were, some of his ideas, such as the Corso Rinascimento and the isolation of the Augustan Mausoleum, together with the reconstruction of the *Ara pacis*, made their way into the Governor’s official regulatory plan and were actually carried out.⁴⁶

44 ACS, PCM, 7/2 B4982, 1931–1933, reprinted in Vannelli (1981), 87.

45 Letter to Mussolini from Ludovico Veralli Spada Potenziani, 2 August 1928, and note to s.e. Il capo del Governo, 3 September 1928 in ACS, PCM, 1931–1933, f. 7.2, n. 2199; cited in Nicoloso (2011), 36. See also Lupano (1991), 184.

46 See Millon (1978), Muntoni (2004), 269 and Kallis (2011a), esp. 64–70.



FIGURE 14.4 Piacentini, *La Grande Roma*, 1925. Plan of city center.
MAP BY BRANDON GARDINER

Piacentini's "La Grande Roma"

Soon after the dust had settled on Brasini's *Urbe Massima*, a new iteration of Mussolini's grand imperial vision made its way onto the scene: Piacentini's *La Grande Roma*. Piacentini was the son of Rome's prominent neo-Classical architect Pio Piacentini, and was the successor to the role of Mussolini's "favorite" architect—again, thanks to the influence of Sarfatti.⁴⁷ He published *La Grande Roma* in the National Syndicate of Fascist Architects' journal, *Architettura* (of which he just happened to be the director), and had another copy sent directly to Palazzo Venezia.⁴⁸ Like the *Urbe Massima*, the roots of this scheme dated back to 1916, in a plan that he developed together with Rome's *Associazione Artistica*. Using the great nineteenth-century capitals of Europe as models, Rome would take on a strong metropolitan image, defined by Classicizing compositional methods, and equipped with new infrastructure (Figure 14.4).⁴⁹ For Piacentini, modernization could only be entirely successful if coupled with grandiose, monumental zones for public assembly and citizen interaction. This

47 Cannistraro and Sullivan (1993), 321.

48 Piacentini (1925–1926), 413. See ACS, PCM, B930, 1926 for the copy he sent to Mussolini.

49 Ciucci (1989b), 83.



FIGURE 14.5 Piacentini, *La Grande Roma*, 1925. Piazza at new central station.

FROM PIACENTINI, *LA GRANDE ROMA*, PIACENTINI ARCHIVES, FLORENCE

new center boasted public buildings situated on a classic Roman grid as a “tangible expression of architectural rebirth,”⁵⁰ and were of suitably “Roman” stamp: Baths, gymnasiums and a theatre, as well as a new university (Figure 14.5).⁵¹ Despite support from Sarfatti, *La Grande Roma* remained unrealized as a project, and was archived after due acknowledgment by Mussolini’s secretary.⁵² However, Piacentini’s ideas continued to be influential, and can be traced in his subsequent schemes for Rome: the PR 31, the GUR plan, and the realization of Rome’s new university, the Città Universitaria (1932–1935).

The GUR and La Burbera Plans

Even the most “social” programs for Rome did not escape the myth of the past. The GUR (Gruppo Urbanisti Romani) was founded in 1926 by nine young Roman architects who shared an interest in the city’s future, later joined by Piacentini, who took on the natural role of leader.⁵³ Their *Programma urbanistico di Roma* is essentially a hybrid between the dynamic ideas of a group of young architects, and the more Classical concepts that Piacentini recycled from the *Grande Roma* plan. The Rome they saw as the capital of Fascism exalted both the Classical past and contemporary, rational, life. Echoing the words of Mussolini, they stated that: “The old Rome must shine in all her beauty; the modern Rome must affirm the rebirth of the nation on these new pages of history” (Figure 14.6).⁵⁴

50 “costituire l’espressione tangibile della rinascita architettonica.” Piacentini (1916), 12.

51 Piacentini (1916), 8, 12–13.

52 ACS, PCM, B930, 1926; Cannistraro and Sullivan (1993), 320–321.

53 Insolera (2002), 131–132. For more on the GUR see Piccinato (1976), 35–39.

54 Gruppo Urbanisti Romani, *Programma Urbanistico di Roma*, 1929. Quoted in Ciucci (1989a), 97–98.

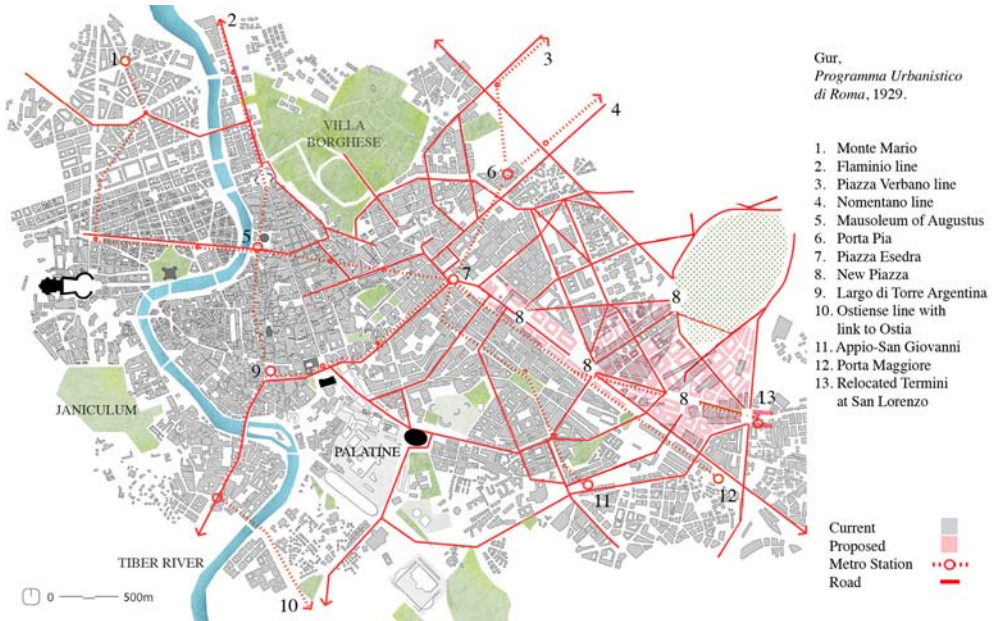


FIGURE 14.6 GUR, *Programma Urbanistico di Roma*, 1929. City centre.
MAP BY BRANDON GARDINER

In contrast to the GUR, the architects who founded the *Burbera* group were traditionalists with established careers, such as Arnaldo Foschini and Gustavo Giovannoni, but also included younger architects such as Enrico Del Debbio and Pietro Aschieri.⁵⁵ Like Piacentini and Brasini before them, their plan substituted Rome's Baroque centre with a vast monumental piazza placed at the intersection of two grand axes: a *cardo* running parallel to the Via del Corso, and a *decumanus* connecting Villa Borghese to St. Peter's, and crossing the Tiber at Ponte Umberto (Figure 14.7). The legacy of ancient Rome was most explicit in the *cardo* and *decumanus*, which were the basic planning elements used by Roman armies in founding colonial towns and military encampments. To superimpose these two cross-axes onto Rome's existing urban fabric was a deliberate attempt to "colonize" its Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque identity with a Fascist present (and future) based on a glorious past. In order to do so, a significant amount of demolition was required (Figure 14.8).

55 The *Burbera* group took their name from the windlass, an ancient instrument used by Roman masons. Its members were: Pietro Aschieri, Giuseppe Boni, Enrico Del Debbio, Vincenzo Fasolo, Arnaldo Foschini, Giacomo Giobbe, Gustavo Giovannoni, Alessandro Limongelli, Felice Nori and Ghino Venturi; cf. Insolera (2011), 133.

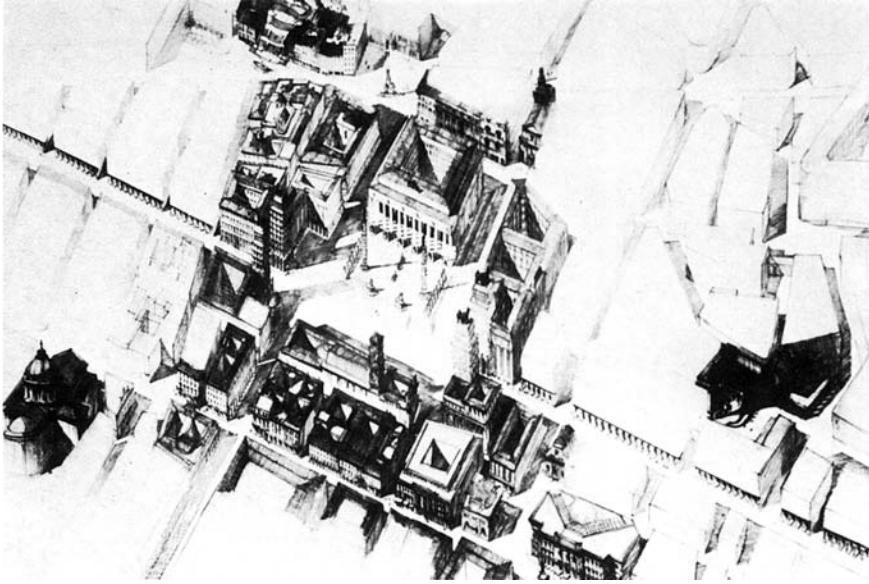


FIGURE 14.7 *La Burbera group, Rome master plan, 1929. Bird's eye view of piazza at intersection of cardo and decumanus.*
FROM *CAPITOLIUM*, COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY LIBRARY, ROME

Piacentini and Brasini shared a central idea of encapsulating modern Rome as Fascist Rome, but while Piacentini modeled his interpretation on the great nineteenth-century European capitals, Brasini operated around the exaltation of a surgically-created imperial and papal Rome. The GUR placed importance on the transformation of Rome from 19th-century capital to 20th-century Fascist metropolis, while the *Burbera* group were concerned with the revival of planning precedents to monumentalize the city in the vein of *romanità*. Although vastly different in their approaches, both plans could potentially transform Rome into the ultimate Fascist city.⁵⁶

56 For more on the alternative plans see Insolera (2011), 131–133; Kallis (2014), 32–41.

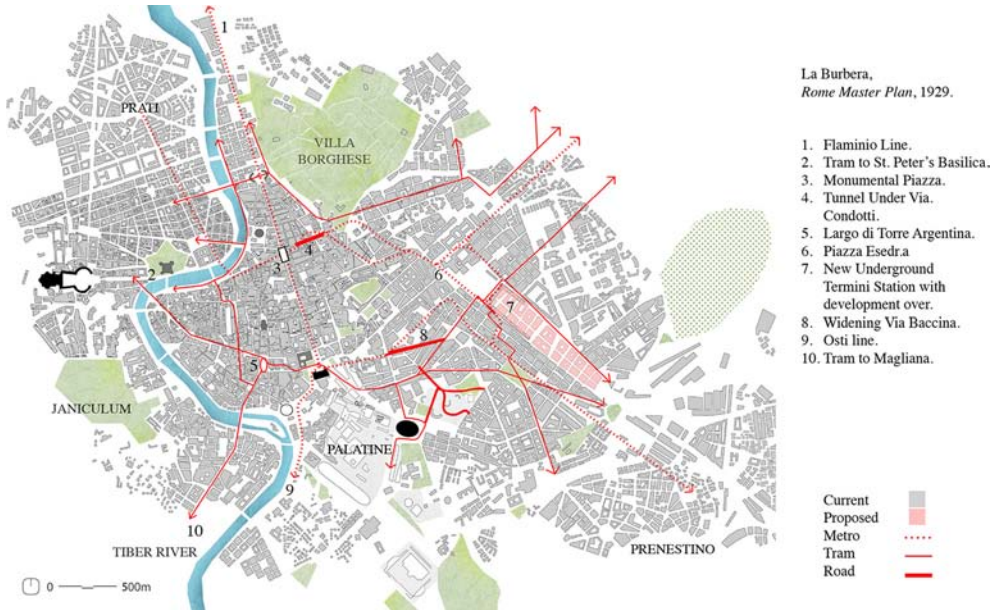


FIGURE 14.8 *La Burbera group, Rome master plan, 1929*
MAP BY BRANDON GARDINER

Demolition and Destruction—"The Regulatory Plan of Imperial Rome" (PR 31)

... quel Piano Regolatore che dovrà dare l'impronta alla Roma Fascista, che non porterà il nome di nessun architetto, di nessun Governatore, ma sarà quello di Mussolini.⁵⁷

... the Regulatory Plan that will make its mark on Fascist Rome will not be signed by any architect or any Governor, but by Mussolini.

The "Regulatory Plan of Imperial Rome" superseded both its predecessors, the 1909 Regulatory Plan, and its 1925–1926 variation.⁵⁸ It aimed at consolidating the planning ideas of the period by incorporating elements from the previous city council plans of 1923 and 1926, and any elements from the independent proposals by Brasini, Piacentini, the GUR and the *Burbera* group that responded to specific directives, and to the concept of *romanità*. Although it did much

57 Governatorato di Roma (1931), 18.

58 For more on these two plans see Insolera (2011), 103–113 and 125–130.

to transform the city's urban landscape, it remained a compromise.⁵⁹ Despite being drawn up by a specially nominated commission of architects, archaeologists, representatives of the governorate, the Ministry of Public Works, and the syndicates of architects and engineers, the real author of the plan is said to have been Mussolini.⁶⁰ It catered to a projected population of 2 million, was designed in less than six months, presented to Mussolini on 28 October 1930 (the eighth anniversary of the March on Rome), and sanctioned by Royal Decree on 6 July 1931.

The plan's political strategy operated on a number of levels: from the making of a modern city based on the maxims of "traffic, beauty and hygiene" to the monumentalization of a Classical myth through the creation of space for the pomp and ceremony of Fascist Rome. In short, it addressed the two types of problems outlined by Mussolini on the day he was officially made a Roman citizen: those of Necessity and those of Grandeur.⁶¹ The urban interventions in PR 31 that had a precise political message to deliver were carried out with the utmost speed; the rest could wait. The city's transformation began with those interventions with the greatest representational value, and those with the deepest connections to those parts of history that had escaped ideological demolition.

Rome could now fulfill its destiny as an imperial capital of grand spaces around monuments connected by perspectival axes.⁶² The monuments, like "giants in their necessary solitude", acted as spatial connectors (or nodes, as Lynch would call them) along the avenues stretching between them.⁶³ Historically, they connected those sections of Rome's past that had escaped demolition: Flavian Rome, with its visual axes connecting the Colosseum to the Arch of Titus and the Equestrian statue of Domitian, or the grand avenues of Sixtus v, with the re-erected obelisks of ancient Egypt marking the locations of Rome's

59 Benton (1995), 121.

60 Governatorato di Roma (1931), 18. For Mussolini's interventions in the design process see Nicoloso (2011), 37–38. The architects were all members of the *Accademia d'Italia*: Marcello Piacentini, Armando Brasini and Cesare Bazzani, as well as the archaeologist Roberto Paribeni. The two representatives of the Fascist syndicate of architects and engineers were Alberto Calza Bini and Edmondo Del Bufalo; the four representatives of the governorate were the superintendent for Antiquities and Fine Arts, Antonio Muñoz, with his colleagues Arnaldo Maccari, Paolo Salatino and Arturo Bianchi; cf. Marcello (2001), 97.

61 Mussolini (1925), 47.

62 Cassetti (2006), 158–159.

63 Lynch (1960), 47–48.

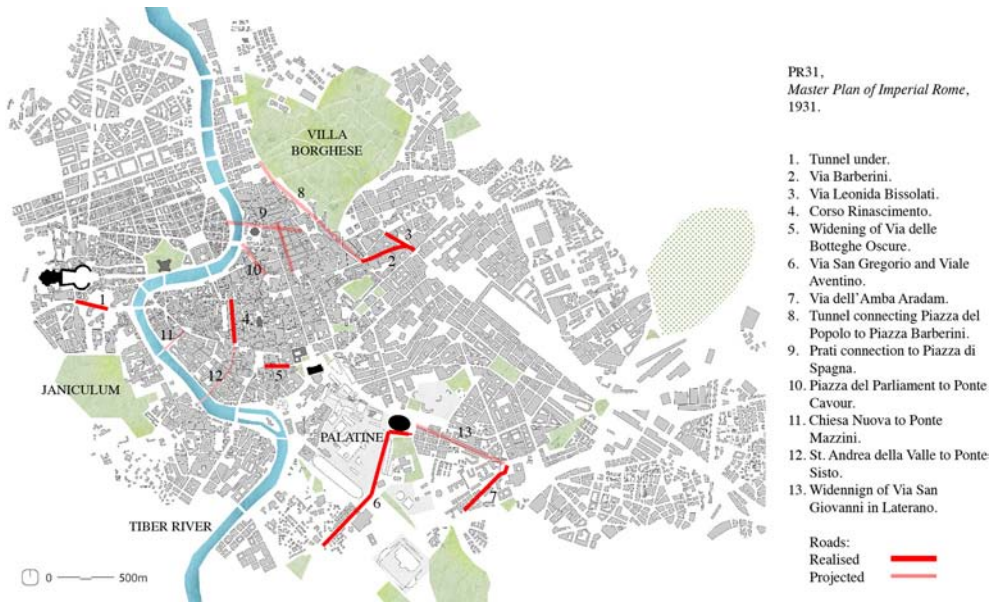


FIGURE 14.9 *Master plan of Imperial Rome (PR31)*
MAP BY BRANDON GARDINER

great churches.⁶⁴ This necessitated the large-scale demolition of thousands of homes (and quite a number of churches) in the historic center, thus completely transforming it (Figure 14.9). Demolitions were approved left, right and center, with no care for the archaeological importance of what was destroyed, and no real idea of what would replace the thousands of cubic meters of homes, churches and Roman ruins that were left to the tender mercies of the wrecking-ball. Left-wing critic and historian Antonio Cederna described this period as “a fumbling in the dark,”⁶⁵ attributed to a confusion of ideas between ancient and modern, between the myth of *romanità*, and the real imperatives of traffic and building requirements.⁶⁶ However, it was the very myth of *romanità* that created the contradictions between modern traffic problems (or as Mussolini put it, necessity) and the historical problems of celebrating a specific past (or as Mussolini put it, grandeur). By carefully editing the palimpsest of Rome’s urban

64 Torelli (1985); Thomas (2004); Giedion (1970); Anker (1996).

65 See Cederna (1979), 257–258 for what he ironically calls a “partial” list.

66 Vannelli (1981), 95–97. New research conducted in the Capitoline archives has shown that at least some Governorate employees acted responsibly, and were actually very methodical and meticulous in documenting, cataloguing and preserving even the smallest vestige or artefact disinterred. See Barbiellini Amidei (1991), 170.

layers, the authors of the Third Rome were able to present an all-embracing narrative of Roman *and* Fascist universality.⁶⁷

Mussolini's Rome was not just about resurrecting the past. As seen in the chapter on civic architecture above, he was passionately enthusiastic about modern architecture, and the making of a modern city was undoubtedly the task of Italy's Rationalist architects. In the closing section of his *Nuova Roma* speech, he tasks the Governor to give "homes, schools, baths, gardens, sporting fields to the Fascist workers."⁶⁸ The state encouraged and supported the modernization of Italian cities and the creation of new rural towns in the reclaimed Pontine Marshes, but Rome was a different question. In a private conversation with Piacentini, Mussolini asked: "When will these modern architects understand that Rationalist architecture is not appropriate to celebrate the Empire?"⁶⁹ In a more public arena, he acknowledged that Rome would never be a modern city like Chicago, because then it "would no longer be Rome."⁷⁰ This attitude did not prevent maxims dear to the Modern Movement, such as the importance of hygiene, being called upon when further justification for *sventramenti* were required. Apart from their own "aesthetic", they facilitated a process of destruction incorporated within a liturgy of creation. They produced a blank canvas onto which the new Fascist city could be inscribed—in this way, the regime could both conquer space and take possession of "historic(al)" time.⁷¹ The "undesirable" periods of history, and the corresponding parts of Rome slated for demolition, were likened to a cancer, a kind of malignant body that caused the city to become a diseased organism. They signified neglect, backwardness, decay and even foreign rule. The authors of the demolitions saw themselves as "surgeons", saving their beloved mother by, literally, disemboweling her.⁷²

Politically, the *sventramenti* allowed spaces for ritual and spectacle to be created. These also allowed for surveillance and control, with the added benefit that slums and their inhabitants could be dispatched out of sight and out of mind to the "new and hygienic" *borgate* (satellite towns).⁷³ The slum-dwellers'

67 Kallis (2014), 44, 78.

68 Mussolini (1925).

69 "ma quando questi architetti moderni capiranno che l'architettura razionale non è adatta a celebrare l'impero?" Greco (1987), 283.

70 Governatorato di Roma (1931), 19.

71 Kallis (2012), 41, 77–78. The idea of an aesthetic of demolition is taken from Kostof (1994).

72 Arthurs (2012), 61.

73 Atkinson (1988), 20–24; Kostof (1994), 21. For the idea of Fascist cities as dependent on surveillance and spectacle, in the context of Ferrara, see Ghirardo (1996).

homes were seen as “chaotic constructions of the past”,⁷⁴ which spoiled the scenography of the “vast, ordered and powerful city” of Mussolini’s vision. However, not all construction was ideal. Those rendered homeless by these demolitions were supposedly sent to live in what the governor described as “smiling communities ... of ordered houses, surrounded by plots of land for vegetable gardens ... with the best services and with sun, light and air”.⁷⁵ They were in reality poorly built, isolated, dust-filled shacks, with entire families living in one room—conditions that were often worse than those from which they had been evicted, since they had been removed from their social network and disconnected from their work.⁷⁶ In the meantime, the Party provided another setting for the new life and social order of the *petite bourgeoisie*, with housing for state employees, office buildings and sports and leisure facilities that transformed the middle-class neighborhoods, each with their local Fascist Youth headquarters (*Case Balilla*/GIL), Afterwork Circles (*Dopolavoro*) and local Party Headquarters (*Case del Fascio*).

The encroachments upon the city’s fabric resulting from the 1931 regulatory plan of Rome manipulated the mythical relationship between real and ideal aspects of the city by building an elided reading of Rome’s past on top of objectified social phenomena. This was a new Fascist brand of *damnatio memoriae* where archaeologists like Muñoz, once a scholar of Medieval and Baroque Rome, dedicated his attention exclusively to its more ancient heritage.⁷⁷ An idealized Fascist future was to be realized through the creation of building complexes which acted as representational cities within the existing city, like the City of Sport (the *Foro Mussolini*) and the City of Learning (the new university, or *Città Universitaria*). Together, these elements created a series of isolated pockets of representational space that provided a physical context where ideology could be embodied. After the numerous *sventramenti*, and the building of dedicated cities to sport and learning, it became clear that the eternal city possessed its own symbolism, and could not simply take on a meaning other than that inherent in it, just because Mussolini wanted it that way.

The myth of the Rome of the Caesars provided a backdrop for the creation of avenues and piazzas for the staging of parades and rallies that could then be filmed and disseminated around the country. Public spectacle (together with

74 Governatorato di Roma (1931), 19.

75 Cederna paraphrases Boncompagni’s response to criticism in the Senate over the living conditions of the evicted families. Cederna (1979), 157.

76 Insolera (2011), 144–151. On the *borgate* see Insolera (1959), Insolera (2002), 135–149, Rossi and Gatti (1991), 76–78 and, most recently, Salsano (2009), 178–211.

77 Muntoni (2004), 266.

radio and newsreels) formed the basis of a political communication strategy that favored gesture and performance over text.⁷⁸ But this public spectacle of commemoration, celebration, inauguration and demonstration⁷⁹ needed a physical space in which to be staged. The driving force behind Mussolini's Rome was the desire to erase selected pasts in order to create a dominated space that was experienced passively by its inhabitants (and spectators): a place where gestural systems acted as a bond between ideology and spatial practice.⁸⁰

Spaces for the Theatre of Consent

Each of the plans and visions under discussion transfigured Rome's monumental and urban realms into living spaces for a theatre of consent, enacted through a set of new gestures such as the Fascist salute, the Roman march and the mass rally.⁸¹ This formed a new Fascist gestural system, used to "embody ideology and bind it to practice."⁸² To use Henri Lefebvre's terminology, these gestural systems provided a connection between Rome's representation of space (the concepts contained in the ideas, words and drawings of Mussolini, the governors and the architects) and its representational space (how this was directly lived by citizens through association with the symbols and images of ancient Rome).⁸³ The space that Mussolini's citizens directly lived and perceived ended up being swallowed by its own concept, taking the spatial practice of how society actually lives in and produces its own space along with it.⁸⁴ Ultimately, this involved the civic rituals and Fascist festivals that were successively introduced into Italian society to "restore an aura of grand spectacle to an increasingly impersonal and individualistic world."⁸⁵ In Mussolini's vision, this gestural space, performed by the Italian people as a unified body stripped of individuality, coincided with a symbolic system based on the myth of *romanità*.⁸⁶

78 Berezin (1997), 46.

79 Berezin (1997), 37.

80 Lefebvre (1997), 39, 215.

81 See also Berezin (1997), 101–104, 114–116.

82 Lefebvre (1997), 215.

83 Lefebvre (1997), 38–39.

84 Lefebvre (1997), 398.

85 Griffin (1998) cites Walter Adamson's summary of Jean-Richard Bloch's article "La democrazia e la festa," (*La Voce*, 28 July 1914).

86 Lefebvre (1997), 216.

This symbolic system was made manifest in the streets and piazzas created through the systematic demolition of Rome's urban fabric, and is most evident in Piazza Venezia and the road connecting it to the Colosseum: the Via dell'Impero—now Via dei Fori imperiali. The monuments of imperial Rome (in particular those of Augustus) were the architectural representation of this symbolic system which allowed Mussolini and his era to negate the space of death. This is because, as Lefebvre has pointed out, monuments have the power to transform spaces of death (that represent the past) into living spaces (of the present) that become extensions of the body in order to serve that common ground between religion, political power and knowledge: the will to endure.⁸⁷ They also elided those periods of history not germane to Fascism's wider political project, and became a "document of the memorable events of that time".⁸⁸ The space that was referred to in the *Nuova Roma* speech as making the Pantheon visible from Piazza Colonna was one of historical and narrative elision, involving the (usually psychoanalytic and linguistic) processes of metonymic displacement and condensation. Rome's city center (as part) was transformed in such a way as worthily to represent the order and power of the Regime (as a whole) in the same way that the body of the leader (Augustus, Mussolini, etc.) stood for the body of the State.⁸⁹ Metaphorically, the elided Rome substituted the existing Rome, to give an impression that the *fons et origo* of *romanità* had been successfully manipulated to fit Fascism's rhetorical project. Urban spaces were no longer about the daily, collective life of the citizens; they were no longer vessels for citizens to define their own space through interaction.⁹⁰ They had to become social condensation points for mass rituals, celebrations and performances. In these new grand spaces of Fascist Rome, the authority of the "sacred" space of ancient Rome and the sacred aspect of its authority were "transferred back and forth, mutually reinforcing one another in the process."⁹¹

The Ritual of Inauguration

As important as the creation of the space or building itself were the rituals constructed around it. No matter how busy he was, Mussolini was sure to be

87 Lefebvre (1997), 221.

88 Governatorato di Roma (1931), 19.

89 For more on the Cult of the *Duce* see Gentile (1993).

90 Lefebvre (1997), 38.

91 Lefebvre (1997), 225.

present at every inaugural blow of “his Majesty the pick axe”, and often wielded it himself. He also ploughed furrows to found cities (just like Romulus), laid foundation stones and inaugurated completed buildings, all under the devoted eye of Istituto Luce cameras.⁹² These spectacles invariably coincided with important anniversaries in the Fascist calendar, such as the 21st April (the date of the legendary foundation of Rome) or the 28th October (the anniversary of the March on Rome, when Mussolini “took” power), even if it meant finishing hastily or going over budget. The 1930s also saw bi-millennial celebrations for the births of Virgil (1930), Horace (1936) and, most important of all, Augustus (1937). Radio broadcasts and Luce newsreels ensured that the audience for these events was not just limited to the number of spectators who could physically fit into the space, but could be expanded to include the entire nation.⁹³

In addition to these yearly pageants and commemorations was the tenth anniversary of Mussolini’s coming to power. This celebration was consciously modeled on the *decennali*—one-off celebrations to mark ten years in power that could augur continued rule for the next ten. Originating in the Republican era, Augustus instituted them as a regular celebration to continue until his death.⁹⁴ The first event to mark the Fascist *decennale* was the inauguration of the Via dell’Impero, followed by the opening of the famous *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution) that took the palin-genetic approach to elided history into interior space.⁹⁵ The Via dell’Impero was not just any inauguration: Governor Boncompagni-Ludovisi was under extreme pressure from the *Duce* to have everything ready in time. In July 1931, Mussolini sent a “shopping list” of what he wanted done in order to make Rome worthy for men of any nation to visit.

- 1st isolate the Capitoline hill as much as possible to the left and to the right of the monument [to Victor Emanuel];
- 2nd finish the work at the forums of Piazza Argentina;
- 3rd complete the truly sluggish work at the Theatre of Marcellus [along the via del Mare];
- 4th finish work at the Imperial Forums;

92 Nicoloso (2011), 45–49.

93 See, for example, Gemmiti (1936); Istituto Luce (1939).

94 Babelon (1877–1919).

95 For contemporary accounts of the exhibition see Sarfatti (1933), and a recent re-print of the catalogue: Alfieri & Freddi (2003). For analyses of the exhibition see: Ghirardo (1992), Schnapp (1992, 2003) and Gentile (2010).

- 5th complete the last section of Via Cavour towards the [Roman] Forum;
- 6th improve the Oppian Hill;
- 7th begin the isolation of the Augustan Mausoleum.⁹⁶

A year later, while watching the work in progress from his balcony, Mussolini was not satisfied, and wrote once more to the governor:

Dear Governor,

There are 80 *working* days to the 28th October. It is now my conviction that if a greater effort is not made (perhaps by doubling the work force) Rome, Rome of the Tenth Anniversary, will appear as a pile of rubble furrowed here and there by deep trenches, and not the Rome that I want to offer to the admiration of the world.⁹⁷

The *decennale* of Fascist rule was celebrated with a double rally: one in Piazza Esedra, and the other in Piazza Venezia, together with a parade down the Via dell'Impero, which expressed a "literal and figurative breaking up of the Italian past."⁹⁸ The Via dell'Impero is the most significant of all the *sventramenti* of the Fascist period. It connected ancient Rome's star monument—the Colosseum—to the heart of Fascist government—the Palazzo Venezia, as signified by the balcony of its *piano nobile*, which acted as Mussolini's *arenario* (speaker's platform) to address the crowds.⁹⁹ Piazza Venezia was radically transformed from the late 1920s onwards to become the spatial and symbolic heart of the Fascist regime—if crowds were to gather to hear their *Duce* speak, then space had to be cleared in order for them to do so. Its centrality was reinforced by its position as a jumping-off point for two new major arteries: the Via dell'Impero and the Via del Mare, which connected it with the *Mare Nostrum* of imperial expansion.

96 Letter from Mussolini to Governor Boncompagni-Ludovisi, 1 July 1931 in ACS, SPDCO, B63, also in Vannelli (1981), 247.

97 Letter from Mussolini to Governor Boncompagni-Ludovisi dated 28 July 1932. ACS, SPDCO, B842. Also in Vannelli (1981), 247.

98 Berezin (1997), 116.

99 Like a number of other interventions, this was not an "invention" of the Fascists. Plans for an avenue in this area were present in Alessandro Viviani's plan for Rome from 1743; cf. Kostof (1973), 64; Insolera (2011), 50. The archaeologist Corrado Ricci planned to demolish numerous medieval houses in order to excavate the area of the Imperial Forums; cf. Nicoloso (2011), 34.

The inauguration of the Via dell'Impero was an act of double re-enactment: the legionaries of the original March on Rome marched down the street in ordered formation to recall the fateful event.¹⁰⁰ Mussolini followed on horseback, as a living re-enactment of the equestrian statues of Marcus Aurelius on the Campidoglio and Victor Emanuel II in Piazza Venezia. The next day, the Roman newspaper *Il messaggero* reported: "The Via dell'Impero, the most beautiful road in the world, now appears in all its dazzling magnificence, in all its Classical austerity".¹⁰¹

The pomp and ceremony facilitated by a space like the Via dell'Impero was repeated a week or so later on the 4th November—when the *Duce* was "escorted" down the new street by glorious legions of war invalids. Addressing the crowds from his balcony, Mussolini declared "Avanti!! verso il nuovo decennio" ("Let us go forth!! Towards the next decade").¹⁰² The use of Via dell'Impero as a space of public ritual became more frequent as the regime shifted its use of living bodies in public spaces to create an emotionally-charged atmosphere of political community.¹⁰³ In May 1938, Via dell'Impero played a truly starring role in the Theatre of Consent as the central stage for Hitler's official state visit. Hitler's entourage was brought from Ostiense station to the king's palace on the Quirinal on a route that consciously mimicked the triumphal parades of Rome's ancient generals. At the beginning of Via dei Trionfi, two square pylons marked the entry into "the sacred part of Imperial Rome". They each held golden effigies of German and Roman eagles standing next to the symbols of their nations: the swastika and the fasces respectively.¹⁰⁴

Via dei Trionfi and Via dell'Impero had their own special significance, since they took the delegation past the city's most important monuments and into the "renewed heart of Latin civilization".¹⁰⁵ Via dell'Impero was lit by gas-flame tripods and electric lamps, while the forums of Caesar, Trajan, Augustus and Nerva were decorated with diffused lighting.

Piazza Venezia, the political heart of the city, would also have its own "special" lighting, emphasizing the size and importance of its two defining monuments: the *Vittoriano* and the Palazzo Venezia, representing the King and the

100 Hyde Minor (1999), 152–153.

101 "La Via dell'Impero, la più bella via del mondo, appare ora in tutta la sua sfolgorante magnificenza, in tutta la sua classica austerità," *Il messaggero*, 29 October 1929, quoted in Insolera and Perego (1983), 118.

102 Ricotti (1932).

103 Berezin (1997), 116.

104 Lilli (1938b).

105 Lilli (1938b).

Duce respectively.¹⁰⁶ The spiritual and political “kinship” supposedly existing between Italy and Germany was based on a shared desire to resurrect a Classical past, an idea that was re-iterated many times throughout the visit.¹⁰⁷ Archaeologist (and anti-Fascist) Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, who was “conscripted” as their tour guide because he spoke German, privately referred to the two leaders as Marius and Sulla.¹⁰⁸

The Via dell'Impero also supported *romanità* by acting as a viewing platform for the then newly excavated imperial forums, those venerable remains that could now “burst forth in a breath of fresh air.”¹⁰⁹ The Istituto Luce newsreel begins with the busy sound of the pick-axe and the modern noise of the automobile, as the industrious workers reduce the “filth” of the centuries into dust. Triumphant music plays in the background, and Via dell'Impero is shown as a wide, clean bustling street with smooth, fast-flowing vehicles. Well-dressed citizens can now line up in neat rows to admire the ruins that were substantially (and speedily) reconstructed to achieve maximum rhetorical effect.¹¹⁰ In 1934, bronze copies of famous statues of each of the emperors were erected in front of their respective forums as “signs” to identify each constructed (and reconstructed) space (Figure 14.10). The space is punctuated by the bronze statues standing proudly in front of each forum. The camera rotates around each statue from above to show clusters of people below, echoing the imagery of the crowds under the *Duce* on his balcony that would have been recognizable from innumerable other newsreels.¹¹¹ Another reel shows marble maps of the Roman (and later Fascist) empires near the Basilica of Maxentius, edited so that the (white) area of the Roman empire literally grows before the viewer's eyes.¹¹²

The Luce newsreels offer an important insight into the new spaces of the city, but do not give us a sense of how they were really used. Camera angles,

106 Lilli (1938a).

107 For a full description and analysis of Hitler's visit see Marcello (2001), 245–247 and Marcello (2003).

108 Bianchi Bandinelli (1962), 171.

109 Antonio Maria Colini, “Una visita di SE il Capo del Governo ai lavori in corso per la grandezza dell'Urbe,” *Capitolium* 4. 8 (1928), 408, cited in Arthurs (2012), 61.

110 For more on Fascism's archaeological project see Cagnetta (1979).

111 The statue in front of Augustus' forum, for example, was a bronze copy of the famous Prima Porta statue in the Vatican museums. See Ricotti (1933a); Ricotti (1933b) and Ricotti (1933c).

112 Istituto Luce (1934). The fifth map, which showed the contemporary Fascist empire, was added on 28 October 1936 and removed in 1945. For a social, semiotic and ritual reading of these maps see Hyde Minor (1999).



FIGURE 14.10 *Statues of Julius Caesar and Augustus in front of their respective forums*
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

editing, music and voiceover combined to present the representational space as it was intended to be used by its architects, its planners and its politicians.

Conclusion

The story of the *Forma Urbis Mussolinii* is a story of vision and rhetoric, of demolition and destruction in the name of *romanità*, where the city itself, the very *fons et origo* of this notion, was molded and shaped to fit a graven image of the past, around which the will to endure into the future was built. This graven image, which first took shape in Mussolini's mind in the company of Sarfatti during the early twenties, in 1925 took the form of a *monitum* to his Governor to make his ideas a "concrete reality". From those words, Italy's architects and planners gave form to this image through a range of development plans that attempted to take Rome into the future with one foot firmly planted in the past. Out of this vision and rhetoric came the demolition and destruction demanded by the Regulatory Plan of Imperial Rome, made possible by the then governor Francesco Boncompagni-Ludovisi, who became one of the most important

protagonists in urban planning debates of the time.¹¹³ Together with his team of archaeologists, architects and bureaucrats, he gutted Rome's monumental heart in order to create channels of representational space in which to stage the theatre of consent. Ultimately, however, Mussolini underestimated the capacity of the city to maintain its independent identity, so that the spatial practices of citizens ultimately took precedence.

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113 Muntoni (2004), 268.

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National Socialism, Classicism, and Architecture

Iain Boyd Whyte

The strong links between National Socialism in Germany and architecture are well known. Adolf Hitler was an architect *manqué* who had failed in his ambition to study at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna, and had found compensation in the years immediately preceding World War I in making watercolor paintings of the buildings and cityscapes that he admired in Vienna and Munich. There is even an unconfirmed suggestion that he worked for some months as an architectural draughtsman in the office of Otto Wagner's pupil Max Fabiani.¹ Looking back in 1924, he recalled that: "For hours and hours I could stand in wonderment before the Opera and the Parliament. The whole Ringstraße had a magic effect on me, as if it were a scene from the Thousand-and-one Nights."² These words were written while Hitler was incarcerated in Landsberg Prison in Bavaria after his conviction for the part he played in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich the previous year. As a metaphor for power and for realigning the world according to his own vision, architecture preoccupied Hitler's thoughts. In *Mein Kampf*, the call to arms that Hitler published in two volumes in 1925 and 1926, he bemoaned the lack of great public buildings in the modern city, buildings like temples, cathedrals, or guildhalls that had symbolized their epoch.

If a similar fate should befall Berlin as befell Rome, future generations might gaze upon the ruins of some Jewish department stores or joint-stock hotels and think that these were the characteristic expressions of the culture of our time. In Berlin itself, compare the shameful disproportion between the buildings which belong to the Reich and those which have been erected for the accommodation of trade and finance.³

To illustrate what form these missing monuments might take, Hitler produced drawings of domed halls and grand arches during his incarceration, which,

¹ See Schwarz (2011), 63 and Hamann (1996), 282.

² Hitler (1925/1926), 28.

³ Hitler (1925/1926), 230.



FIGURE 15.1 *Fritz Erler, Portrait of Adolf Hitler, 1939*
ULLSTEIN BILD

in time, would be incorporated into Albert Speer's plans for the rebuilding of Berlin.

Once installed as Reich Chancellor in January 1933, the role of the political leader and that of the architect became conflated, and the metaphor of Hitler as the architect of the Third Reich was endlessly repeated. The painter Fritz Erler, for example, portrayed Hitler against the backdrop of the newly-completed Haus der Deutschen Kunst (House of German Art) in Munich, with a stonemason's hammer and measure at his feet (Figure 15.1). In print, too, he was hailed as the builder of the new German state. In a book on the great Prussian architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, published in 1943, we read that:

Only when the fragmented “Volk” was joined together through Adolf Hitler in a united world view was the demoralization of art checked and a new program of architecture initiated. [...] The German People was once again given a great architect (*Baumeister*): Adolf Hitler. [...] In their monumental power, his buildings offer evidence in stone not only of the gigantic greatness of this master, but also of the loyalty to the People of his creations, which are rooted deeply in the German essence. [...] When future ages write an architectural history of the German People, the founder of the Third Reich will be named not only as a crucial patron, but at the same time as the creator of the new German architecture.⁴

This panegyric to Hitler in a book on Schinkel is not fortuitous: the Prussian Classicism that Schinkel nurtured in the early decades of the nineteenth century was an obvious reference point for the architectural reforms planned by Hitler for the Third Reich.

As in every other sphere of National Socialist ideological and cultural debate, however, there were many competing views on the direction and the models that the new state architecture should follow. The general consensus, however, was that the modernist functionalism (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) that had flourished in Germany in the 1920s was not appropriate for public buildings, even if it remained acceptable in the world of industry and factory building. The point was put very forcibly by Rudolf Wolters in an officially-sanctioned book on architecture, published in 1944: “Others now sought to cast off ornament, to cut everything out and to build in a ‘sachlich’ manner. This attempt led to utter architectural bankruptcy. Away with columns, ornaments, cornices, away with all moldings, away with all decoration and with every element that is not absolutely necessary. The new houses looked like plucked birds, while the old ones had their decorative moldings knocked off. Everything was cleansed, purified, and sheared-off bare, and finally looked as if one ‘had achieved very little with modest means.’”⁵ The return to an architecture of columns and cornices meant the return to the classical language of architecture. The question then confronting the Nazi architects was which classical language to use.

The version of Greece favored by philosophers and ideologues sympathetic to the National Socialist Party was not the Athens of Pericles and the Parthenon, or indeed of Winckelmann and Goethe, but rather the archaic, pre-rational Greece. Nazi intellectuals re-politicized the Greeks and invoked them as a

4 Schmid (1943), iii.

5 Wolters (1944), 31.

model for German national renewal.⁶ Symptomatic of this tendency was the reinscription of Plato by Kurt Hildebrandt not as a universal humanist but as a political “prototype for the Germans [...] a savior in times of dissolution and destruction.”⁷ According to the nineteenth-century Basel classicist, Johann Jacob Bachofen, who had a strong influence on National Socialist philosophers, the most profound thoughts of the Ancient Greeks were to be found in the pre-rationalist syntax of symbols and myths, and particularly those of the grave. These ancient sepulchral myths, he argued, have the power to free man from the limitations of finite existence and the historical moment: “Their symbolism [...] forms a bond between early and late generations, annulling distinctions of time, space, and nationality.”⁸ Bachofen was followed by Nietzsche, and by the Nietzsche scholar and Nazi ideologue Alfred Baeumler, in arguing that the archaic era marked the high point of Greek antiquity. In contrast, Socratic rationalism and Athenian democracy marked the beginning of a decline. The true focus of this National Socialist view of ancient tragedy, however, was not simply the mystical suffering of Dionysius, but the real suffering and deeds of heroes:

The shudders that surround the tragic work of art are the shudders of the grave. The stricken silence of the participants, that mixture of terror and shock that is transmitted to the spectators, springs from the respect for the dead.⁹

This quotation from Baeumler is a useful starting-point from which to appraise National Socialist architecture, an architecture that found its ultimate meaning in the celebration of death and sacrifice.

A telling example of this morbid fixation can be found in one of the standard works on National Socialist architecture, *Bauten des Dritten Reiches*, published in 1937. It was written by the art historian Hubert Schrade, who had joined Alfred Rosenberg’s *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Combat League for German Culture) in 1933, and favored martial tones in his polemics on behalf of the Nazi revolution. His book begins not with the buildings already constructed by 1937 under the aegis of the Party—the Führerbau (Führer Building), the Ehrentempel (Temples of Honor), or the Haus der deutschen Kunst in Munich; the Olympic Stadium in Berlin, or the Ordensburg school for the Party

6 See Gildenhard and Ruehl (2003).

7 Hildebrandt (1930); cited in M. Whyte (2008); see also the articles by Stefan Rebenich and Alan Kim in this volume.

8 Bachofen (1927), 7–8.

9 Baeumler (1926), lxxviii.

elite, completed at Sonthofen in the Allgäu as early as 1934. Instead, Schrade launched his account with the Tannenberg monument, built in 1924–1927 to commemorate the German soldiers who fell in the battles fought at Tannenberg in August 1914 and at the Masurian Lakes the following month, and subsequently the burial place of Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg.¹⁰ According to Schrade, the real designers of the monument were not the architects, Walter and Johannes Krüger, but rather the communal will that emerged from the defeat in World War I, and the “[...] creative forces that arose from the death toll of millions as the most potent force for design.”¹¹ And, just as the architectural design was generated by death, so it was committed to an architecture that in its various manifestations memorialized the warrior’s sacrifice: “[Once in] power, an essential force of National Socialism has been revealed, which immediately moved to transform the memory of the dead into an exhorting, form-giving reality in the life of the people. National Socialism, born from the spirit of military service, wanted to be and will be the ‘eternal sentinel’ of its people [...]”.¹² From the Tannenberg monument, it was a small step in Schrade’s narrative to move on to the two small, temple-like structures erected to form a portal at the eastern end of the Königsplatz in Munich in the early days of the Third Reich.

This rectangular square was the location of three eminent neoclassical buildings: the Propyläen, designed by Leo von Klenze on the model of its namesake on the Acropolis in Athens, the Glyptothek, designed by Klenze to house classical sculptures and mosaics, and the Antikensammlung, notable for its collection of Greek, Roman, and Etruscan art. Little wonder, given this context, that the Nazi remodeling of the Königsplatz was referred to by contemporaries as the “Acropolis Germaniae”. Paul Ludwig Troost, the “Erste Baumeister des Führers” (first architect of the Führer), designed the two Ehrentempel that housed the sarcophagi of sixteen “martyrs of the movement” shot by the police in the course of Hitler’s failed Beer Hall Putsch of 8–9 November 1923 (Figure 15.2). In creating this scenography, Troost captured on a very small scale the essence of National Socialist art and aesthetics, namely the confluence of kitsch and death. In Saul Friedländer’s words:

Kitsch is a debased form of myth, but nevertheless draws from the mythic substance—a part of its emotional impact—the death of a hero; the eternal march, the twilight of the gods; myth is a footprint, an echo of

10 The National Socialists also enshrined copies of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* at Tannenberg.

11 Schrade (1937), 10.

12 Schrade (1937), 10.



FIGURE 15.2 *Paul Ludwig Troost, Ehrentempel (Temples of Honor), Munich, 1935*
GERMANY: THE OLYMPIC YEAR 1936, BERLIN: VOLK UND REICH VERLAG,
1936

lost worlds, haunting an imagination invaded by excessive rationality and thus becoming the crystallization point for the thrusts of the archaic and the irrational.¹³

13 Friedländer (1993), 49.

With the cast-iron sarcophagi of the “martyrs” watched over by armed ss honor guards and decorated by wreaths and banners, the Ehrentempel summoned up archaic myths of the dead hero, serving as the coulisse for military parades and for uniformed displays of grief. The blood of the martyrs, as Hitler had insisted in 1934, constituted the baptismal water of the new National Socialist state.¹⁴ The sixteen bodies were reburied in an elaborate ceremony on 9 November 1935, and Alfred Rosenberg was entrusted with the task of reporting the event on the front page of the Party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, under the headline “The Final Roll Call”.¹⁵

For those who visit Munich, seeing these sixteen sarcophagi will admonish them to remember the beautiful race-bound unity of the events at the Feldherrenhalle, which have become symbolic for all of us. The rigorous form of the buildings and the stark simplicity of the sarcophagi are representative of the basically uncomplicated and rigorous thought of National Socialism. Now the sixteen dead have found their final resting place in the middle of the teeming life of the Capital City of the Movement. [...] Like an ancient grave of our tribal Hun ancestors, yet expressed in the conceptual form of the twentieth century [...], this grave will serve as an eternal declaration of loyalty to that special breed of humanity, which we call the German destiny.¹⁶

The ceremony of 9 November became the subject of a documentary film, released in 1936 and entitled *Für Uns* (For Us), which was widely shown to German youth as an admonition to follow the example of the martyred heroes of the movement.

According to his wife and collaborator, Troost’s explicit ambition was to “revive an early classical or Doric architecture”,¹⁷ and this goal was repeated in a propaganda volume on National Socialist architecture, published in English

14 See Scobie (1990), 64.

15 Trained as an architect in Moscow, Alfred Rosenberg was one of the founder members of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist Workers’ Party). An anti-Semite and anti-Bolshevik, he played a significant role in framing the Nazi Party ideology in the 1920s, and in 1934 was appointed “Beauftragte des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der NSDAP” (Führer’s commissioner for the overall spiritual and philosophical education of the Party).

16 Rosenberg, *Völkische Beobachter*, 9 November 1935, English translation from Baird (1990), 63.

17 Gerdy Troost, letter to Robert R. Taylor, 29 November 1969, in Taylor (1974), 67 n. 51.



FIGURE 15.3 *Paul Ludwig Troost, Haus der deutschen Kunst, Munich, 1933–1937*
BUNDESARCHIV

for a North American audience. Here we read that “The ‘Ewige Tempel,’ as Goethe designated the enduring authority of the classic formula, had been a recurrent architectural motif in Germany, and it is never more appropriate when used to symbolize an ideal or serve as a monument to one.” This was a progressive classicism, as confirmed in the continuing text: “But contemporary German classicism is no mere imitation of the temple motif. It has made a harmonious correlation between Hellenic serenity and the austere simplicity of modern functional architecture. The Greek idea is found more in the order and harmony of space and mass than in the use of Doric column and frieze.”¹⁸ In reality, the twin temples bore very little relation to classical architecture, beyond the simplest structural device of post and lintel. The vertical structure of each temple was composed of 24 rectangular, fluted pillars without capitals, which supported a ferroconcrete cornice clad in stone. In formal terms, this might be characterized as carcass classicism: the basic bones of architectural classicism with none of the refinement or detail of antiquity. As Alex Scobie has noted, these pillars, with minimal echoes of the classical column, were to become a recurring motif in the Party buildings subsequently designed by Albert Speer.¹⁹

18 Anon. (1940), 15. On the archeological dimension of the parallels drawn between ancient Greek and National Socialist architecture, see Stefan Altekamp’s essay in this volume.

19 Scobie (1990), 58.

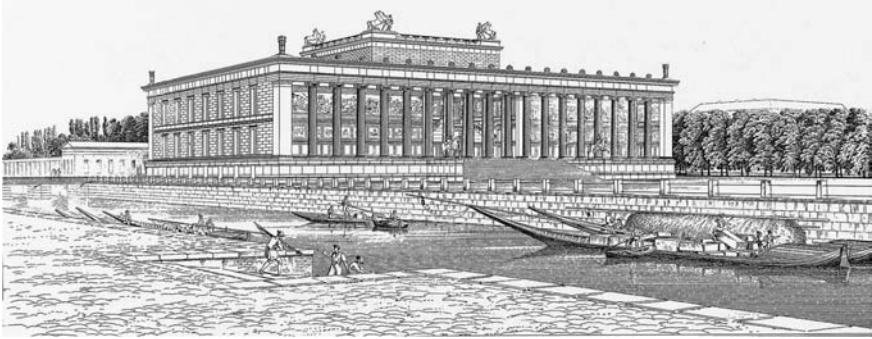


FIGURE 15.4 Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Altes Museum, Berlin*, 1823–1830

Troost's lack of interest in the classical canon can be seen very clearly in the other major structure built to his design before his premature death: the Haus der deutschen Kunst, the first major public building of the Nazi regime (Figure 15.3). Based on a scheme that Troost had first produced in 1931 for the competition to replace the old Munich Glaspalast, which had burned down in June that year, the Haus der deutschen Kunst looked for historical authentication to Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin, planned and built in 1823–1830 (Figure 15.4). In contrast to the Schinkel scheme, however, Troost's gallery was essentially a steel-framed shed, 175 meters long and 75 meters deep, clad principally in limestone, with a colonnade stretching the entire length of the street front. Troost originally planned to use rectangular pillars here such as those he had designed for the Ehrentempel, but was persuaded, possibly by Hitler himself,²⁰ to substitute circular columns, only retaining the square-section for the final pillar at each end of the colonnade. The results are very unconvincing, as the corner pillars are visually far too insubstantial to terminate the colonnade satisfactorily. In revealing contrast, Schinkel sets the Ionic columns on the Altes Museum in Berlin *in antis*, so that the four corners of the building are formed by substantial pillars. These pillars turn the corner from front to façade in an entirely convincing way, and this transition from one façade to another is brilliantly detailed in the decorative horizontal frieze that runs behind the pillars at the four corners to re-emerge on the adjoining façade. In his enormously influential book *Der Preußische Stil* (The Prussian Style), first published in 1916 and regularly reissued over the following quarter century, the German nationalist Arthur Moeller van den Bruck

20 See Arndt (1988), 75.

singled out these corner pillars as exemplary both of Prussian classicism and of Schinkel's understanding of the Doric style.

It is all the same whether or not these corner pillars carry loads and hold the building together: they do this, but at the same time they do more: in that they are useful they are beautiful. That is what is magnificent about them, that they are too proud and too honest to be simply beautiful without being true! This is the truthfulness of the Doric temple, in that the vestiges of its origins in wooden construction—triglyphs as beam ends and metopes as filling—live on without being shams, serving as a decoration that runs through the entire structure not only externally but also essentially, and sustains in its very beauty the notion of its necessity.²¹

Purple prose, but an encomium that could hardly be directed at Troost's gallery, which was intentionally left undecorated apart from a bronze eagle above the entrance, a cassetted mosaic that ran along the internal ceiling of the colonnade, and a series of bronze plaques carrying the names of the major German industrialists who had funded the building.²²

In plan, too, Troost's design is straightforward to the point of banality, with a strict symmetry on both the principal entrance axis and the subsidiary cross axis, with even the colonnade on the main façade echoed on the rear front, facing the Englischer Garten. Schinkel, in striking contrast, created a succession of marvelously articulated entrance spaces and staircases that led the visitor either into the central rotunda, whose diameter was exactly half that of the Roman Pantheon, or to the open loggia on the upper level, which offered views back out through the colonnade to the Royal Palace in Berlin. The US propaganda text observes that "The Haus der Deutschen Kunst [...] reminds one of Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin which, more than any other German museum, suggests the lofty purpose to which an art museum should be dedicated."²³ To draw any favorable comparison is to traduce Schinkel's masterpiece.

The same propaganda text, however, does note that the Troost gallery "uses the classic motif in combination with the most efficient fenestration, lighting equipment, and gallery arrangement",²⁴ which gives a useful insight into

21 Moeller van den Bruck (1931 [1916]), 162–163.

22 See Brantl (2007), 56–68.

23 Anon. (1940), 17.

24 Anon. (1940), 17.

Troost's practice. Indeed, the Munich gallery, although ultra-conventional in its form, was extremely modern in its technical specification. There was an audio system that enabled speeches to be amplified inside the building, relayed outside to the Prinzregentenstraße via built-in loudspeakers, and even broadcast simultaneously on the radio. The building had four elevators, the most advanced lighting, and a combined heating-cooling system installed in the basement, alongside an air-raid shelter for 300 people. This combination of soft historicist design and high technology points to Troost's earlier career as a successful designer of the interior fittings of ocean liners. His collaboration with Norddeutsche Lloyd had begun as early as 1912 and saw him designing everything from the silver cutlery on the captain's table to hundreds of luxurious cabins and public rooms. Whereas, for modernist architects like Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the ocean liner was a model for the "machine for living in", in the designs of Troost, the high technology of the liner was combined with grand, representative spaces and detailing that brought the message of German tradition, domestic culture, and solidity to the international audience. This combination of technical assurance and scenographic installation was given a political dimension at the Haus der deutschen Kunst through the choice of red marble facings in the ceremonial entrance hall, echoing the red on the swastikas on the two flagpoles that flanked the front façade. It was a combination that also informed the two other major Party buildings constructed in Munich directly beside the two Ehrentempel, the Führerbau and the Verwaltungsbau (Administration Building). As in the gallery, bland stone facades disguise ferroconcrete structural frames, high-speed elevators, under-floor heating, and expansive glass roofs with built-in heating elements to melt the winter snow. The Verwaltungsbau had 60 loudspeakers to convey radio and internal messages, an air raid shelter with gas filters and a 2.5-meter thick reinforced concrete roof, and was linked to the Führerbau by two tunnels, which also carried hot water to both buildings from the freestanding power plant in the neighboring street.

While high-tech carcass classicism was favored for the Party buildings in Munich, classicizing kitsch was the leitmotif for the parades, assemblies, and celebrations for which they formed the backdrop. Heroic sacrifice and god-like immortality were the themes of the Ehrentempel where the bodies of the martyrs were laid to rest. As the Party newspaper reported the event on 10 November 1935: "The dead of 9 November have taken their posts as living custodians in front of the Party buildings in Munich. [...] The Munich celebration of resurrection is one of the most epic and sublime celebrations [...], a moment of sacred, heroic faith. A religious service without church bells and organ music, a religious service with flags and drums, with rhythmic march-

ing and song, the thanks of free believers. [...] We National Socialists, old and young, thank Adolf Hitler for this unforgettable day and for its sacred symbolism of German resurrection and German eternity.”²⁵ Before Munich had been assigned the role of “Hauptstadt der Bewegung” (capital city of the movement) in 1935, it had also been called the “Hauptstadt der deutschen Kunst” (capital city of German art) in October 1933 by Hitler in his speech to mark the laying of the foundation stone for the Haus der deutschen Kunst. This event, held on the “Day of German Art,” was marked by a grandiose procession staged by the sculptor Joseph Wackerle. The procession was led by a large-scale model of Troost’s gallery building, which was followed by guild members and various homages to great German artists and legends of the past. The clearest reference to antiquity was the poetry float, which was drawn by four chargers “bearing a rearing Pegasus (by E.A. Rauch) and crossed *thyrsoi*, followed by boys and girls in ancient costumes.”²⁶ Sustaining the association with antiquity, the symbolic motif designed by Richard Klein to mark the event combined the profile head of Pallas Athena with a burning torch, the German eagle, and the swastika. It became the standard publicity image for all the exhibitions subsequently held in the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, and was also used for the front cover of the official Party art journal, *Kunst im deutschen Reich*.

The opening of the new gallery was marked on 18 July 1937 by the opening of the first *Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (Great Exhibition of German Art), an annual showpiece of the sort of art approved by the Party, which ran until 1944, when other matters became more pressing. The day after saw another massive procession, entitled “2000 Years of German Culture”, where, amid thousands of banners and flags, floats depicted the Teutonic age, followed by the Roman, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic ages, a sequence that found its culmination with the New Era float (Figure 15.5). This established the pattern for similar processions that were staged in conjunction with successive German Art exhibitions. One of the most spectacular offerings in the 1938 iteration was a massive head of Pallas Athena, carried by Teutons, reinforcing the entirely specious proposal made by Party ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg of a genealogy of a superior Nordic race, which embraced the Amorites of the Middle East, the Aryans of India, the early Greeks and Romans, and, finally, the German people. Guided by honor and heroism, a love of art and music, and an eternal striving for wisdom—characteristics personified for Rosenberg in the spirit of Wotan—the Nordic race was respon-

25 Grammbitter and Lauterbach (2009), 23–24.

26 *Die Kunst*, December 1933, cited in Michaud (2004), 103.



FIGURE 15.5 “2000 years of German Culture”, pageant to mark the opening of the *Haus der deutschen Kunst* (House of German Art), Munich, 18 July 1937
BAYERISCHES STAATSARCHIV

sible for all the great achievements of human civilization.²⁷ But, as Eric Michaud has persuasively argued: “The very form of the procession in truth constituted a negation of the past and a celebration of the live simultaneity of

27 See M. Whyte (2008), 170. According to Rosenberg, the dream of Nordic man was made manifest in Hellas: “As sturdy masters and warriors, the Hellenic tribes got rid of the squalid way of life of the Levantine traders, and, with the labor of the subjugated people, an incomparable creative spirit built its legends in stone, and imposed idleness to compose and sing immortal myths of the heroes. A true aristocratic constitution prevented any miscegenation.”—Rosenberg (1943), 34. On the myth of the Aryan race, see Felix Wiedemann’s essay in this volume.

the myth in all its parts".²⁸ In the Munich processions, the past was reinvented as myth, and as an endorsement of the racist ideologies of the present. Nordic inclusion was predicated on Semitic exclusion.

While the Munich processions promoted the new National Socialist regime on the national stage, the 1936 Berlin Olympics allowed the Party to present itself to an international audience. The tone of the Berlin games was insistently martial and political, echoing the function of the original Panhellenic games as a formalized mechanism within which the Ancient Greek city states competed against each other, as the gathering at which political alliances were announced and celebrated, and where sacrifices were offered to the gods for victory in battle. The "Nordic" genealogy stretching from the ancient Hellenes to the modern Germans was asserted physically by the invention of the *Fackellauf* (torch relay), which carried the Olympic flame 3,331 kilometers from the Temple of Zeus in Olympia to Berlin. The torches used for the ceremony had been donated and produced by the armaments firm Krupp, and took the form of an olive leaf. The prologue to Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympia* gives a misty-lensed account of the Grecian antecedents of the modern Olympics, with Myron's Discobolus morphing into a nude German decathlete, and naked female statuary blending into images of athletic German girls working at their exercises. The lighting of the torch is described in tense tones in one of the souvenir books published by the tobacco industry to mark the games:

Thirteen delicate maidens, dressed in the vestments of ancient priestesses, stride through the sacred grove of Zeus. Their path leads through the stone archway of the old stadium. They stop at the starting point of the running track. A concave mirror captures a minute part of the rays of the sun and compresses them into a fiery glow. The girls kneel down, and their leader, Koula Pratsika, holds the torch in the combustion point of the mirror. [...] A hiss. The first Olympic torch burns brightly in the midday sun.²⁹

His torch alight, a young Greek runner wove his way down from the Temple of Zeus to pass the flame on to the relay of runners who took it to the Olympic stadium in Berlin.

²⁸ Michaud (2004), 106.

²⁹ May (1936), 8. For a detailed analysis of Riefenstahl's *Olympia*, see Daniel Wildmann's essay in this volume.

Just as the mirror focused the rays of the sun to light the torch, so Riefenstahl's prologue—the only non-documentary section of the film—is particularly revealing as the instrumentalization, in an intensely condensed and direct manner, of ancient myths in the service of the Party. As Riefenstahl herself explained: "In the prologue [...] the ideal of classical form is superseded by the living materialization of the warrior of today."³⁰ Through reference to ancient myth, the sporting event was made to serve the political ambitions of the Third Reich, and, as Hilmar Hoffmann has suggested, "the sporting youth of the nations were summarily enrolled psychologically into the Hitler Youth."³¹

On its final leg through Berlin, the torch was used to ignite a fire bowl "altar" in the Lustgarten, while in the nearby Neue Wache—a guardhouse on Unter den Linden designed by Schinkel as a small Doric temple—a wreath was laid at the monument to the German dead of the First World War. This theme of heroic sacrifice on the battlefield was one of the dominant motifs of the Berlin Olympics, where sport became infused with the cult of the dead, revanchism, and militarism. It was one of the explicit goals of the instigator of the games, Carl Diem, who insisted that:

Above the modern event of the Olympic Games lies the magical circle of ancient history and of godly religiosity [...], those things that introduce the celebration: the ringing of bells—fanfares—oaths—flags—doves—symbolic lighting—all this means consecration, comparable to a church service without replicating one. A profound sense of emotion suffuses the entire event, comparable to a religious festival.³²

In this spirit, Diem's vast choral and dance spectacle *Olympic Youth*, choreographed by Mary Wigman among others, concluded to the music of Carl Orff

30 Leni Riefenstahl, cited in Hoffmann (1993), 143.

31 Hoffmann (1993), 143. The American novelist Tom Wolfe caught the mood well in *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940): "The sheer pageantry of the occasion was overwhelming, so much so that [he] began to feel oppressed by it. There seemed to be something ominous in it. One sensed a stupendous connection of effort, a tremendous drawing together and ordering in the vast collective power of the land. And the thing that made it seem ominous was that it so evidently went beyond what the games themselves demanded. The games were overshadowed, and were no longer merely sporting competitions to which other nations had sent their chosen teams. They became, day after day, an orderly and overwhelming demonstration in which the whole of Germany had been schooled and disciplined. It was as if the games had been chosen as a symbol of the new collective might, a means of showing to the world in concrete terms what this new power had come to be."

32 Carl Diem, quoted in Lenk (1964), 19.



FIGURE 15.6 *Werner March and Konrad Robert Heidenreich, Olympic Games site, Berlin, 1936, Dietrich-Eckart-Bühne (Dietrich Eckart Stage) in foreground*
 WERNER MARCH, *BAUWERK REICHSSPORTFELD*, BERLIN: DEUTSCHER KUNSTVERLAG, 1936, PLATE 3

and Werner Egk in a section entitled *Heldenkampf und Totenklage* (heroes' struggle and lament for the dead): "Think of the dead / thank the dead / who completed their circle / all honor to them / the noblest of all prizes for victory."

At the Olympic site (Figure 15.6), the young reserve soldiers who died in the early months of World War I were remembered and honored in the Langemarck Halle, recalling the Belgian village of Langemarck, where some 2,000 German soldiers perished in one day—10 November 1914—in the First Battle of Ypres. According to the propaganda account of this disaster created by the German High Command, they went to their deaths singing the German national anthem: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles ...".³³ This myth of willing and heroic sacrifice was marked by the location inside the Langemarck Halle of the flags of the regiments involved in the battle, and some blood-soaked Flanders earth, set under a stone in the floor. Ascending through and out of the Hall was the Olympic bell tower, whose massive bell, the largest steel bell in the

33 For a full account of the construction of the Langemarck myth, see Mosse (1990), 70–74 and Baird (1990), 1–13.

world, was engraved with the motto “Ich rufe die Jugend der Welt” (I summon the youth of the world): a call, given its location, to both the living and the dead.

In contrast to the message of the structure, the architecture of the Langermarck Halle was very restrained, and articulated by twelve square pillars with nominal capitals, the solution already favored in Munich by Troost. The stadium design was the work of Werner March, working originally with his brother, Walter March. In his memoirs, Speer tells an elaborate story of reworking a more modernist design by March to bring it into accord with the lithic demands of the Party. According to Speer, Hitler threatened to cancel the Berlin games on the grounds that he would “never set foot inside a glass box” like the one proposed by March. To resolve this crisis Speer claims to have worked overnight on a “sketch showing how the steel skeleton already built could be clad in natural stone and have more massive cornices added. The glass partitions were eliminated, and Hitler was content.”³⁴ There is, however, absolutely no evidence that this was the case. Far from being dissatisfied with Werner March’s efforts, Hitler awarded him a professorial title on 4 August 1936 during the Olympic Games, and, buoyed by this success, March received several other governmental commissions during the National Socialist era.³⁵ March’s stadium was a modern, steel-framed structure clad in stone: absolutely in the spirit of carcass classicism established by Troost for major public buildings (Figure 15.7). As a propaganda publication on the stadium published under March’s name explains: “The rule of complete uniformity in the development of the interior also applied to the exterior. Here too lay the close kinship of the German Olympic stadium with the ancient amphitheater.”³⁶

In reality, the connections with Greek antecedents sought by the designers and planners of the Olympic complex were more vigorously expressed by the adjacent open-air theater and by the sculptural program for the Olympic site, rather than by the stadium itself. The theater was particularly interesting. It was planned, according to Werner March’s ghostwriter, as a site for “sacred musical drama and nationalistic celebrations.”³⁷ As described in the Olympic souvenir

34 Speer (1970), 80.

35 See Schäche and Szymanski (2001), 79–81. Speer’s invention is very typical of his attempts to rewrite history in the books produced while in prison after the war, portraying himself as an “apolitical technician” who accepted collective responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism but was not directly involved as an agent of these crimes. Additionally, he portrays himself as a supremely talented designer, who could rework a massive project like the Olympic Stadium overnight. On all counts, he was lying.

36 March (1936), 22, 24.

37 March (1936), 43.



FIGURE 15.7 *Werner March, Olympic Stadium, Berlin, 1936*
 WERNER MARCH, *BAUWERK REICHSSPORTFELD*, BERLIN: DEUTSCHER
 KUNSTVERLAG, 1936, PLATE 8

volume: "Close to the Reich Sport Ground, one finds the most beautiful open-air theater in the world, named after Dietrich Eckart, the National Socialist poet. The theater will revive ancient art. Its general structure is reminiscent of the mighty amphitheater of ancient Hellas."³⁸ Eckart was the spiritual father of the Party, Hitler's mentor and model in the early 1920s, and the first editor of the Party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The Nazi reinvention of the *Thingspiel* pointed back to the *Thing*, a gathering of the old Germanic or Nordic people. Four hundred *Thingspielplätze* (Thing theaters) were planned by the Party, but only forty were built before the outbreak of the war in 1939. In July 1936, 1,200 working men took part in a performance of Eberhard Wolfgang Möller's *Frankenburger Würfelspiel*, commissioned by Josef Goebbels and performed at the Dietrich-Eckart-Bühne as part of the artistic program of the Olympics. This was a retelling of a tale dating back to 1626 and the outbreak of the Peasants' War in Upper Austria. In the following month, the Dietrich-

38 Anon. (1936), n.p.

Eckart-Bühne hosted five staged performances of Handel's oratorio *Herakles*, chosen for its "spiritual connection with the Olympic idea."³⁹

Here, as in every other aspect of the 1936 Olympics, Nazi ideology was omnipresent. Indeed, the official program explained to the audience, which numbered 100,000 in total, that: "We should remember that the Greeks developed their ideal of beauty from an all-embracing concept, which in recent years has been completely lost to us [...]."⁴⁰ The appropriation of Nordic, Germanic and also of classical Greek heritage on the same Olympic site is very typical of the inner contradictions that characterized the National Socialist Party. In its early incarnations, the Party promoted anti-urbanist, provincial policies that idealized German blood and soil (*Blut und Boden*), the noble peasant, the agricultural economy, and the Aryan family. By 1936, however, this restrictive narrative was increasingly seen as inadequate by the modernizing wing of the Party led by Goebbels and Speer, and unable to articulate the Party's ambition to become a world power. Classicism, as a universal language of architecture, was summoned by Hitler and Speer to give visible expression to these global aspirations. As Hilmar Hoffmann has noted:

The classical language of form is thus essentially a code for the authoritarian appropriation of a "world language", in which Fascism is defined as more universal, more functional, and as the bearer of more meaning than as merely German nationalist, völkisch, regional, and tribal [...].⁴¹

The favored model of the ideologues, however, was pre-rational Greece, a preference revealed in many of the sculptures commissioned for the Olympic site. The archetype here was Archaic Greek stone sculpture, most obviously the *kouros*, the life-sized youthful figure sculpture developed around the seventh century BCE in the Cyclades. Rigid and static in its pose and intended to be seen from the front, the *kouros* was the clear model for three double figures on the Olympic site: *Diskuswerfer* (discus thrower) and *Staffelläufer* (relay runners), both by Karl Albiker, and *Sportkameraden* (comrades in sport) by Josep "Sepp" Mages. Joseph Wackerle's *Rossführer* (horse handler) also derives from the *kouros*, while the *Siegesgöttin* (goddess of victory) by Willy Meller points back to the Archaic female precedent of the *korê* (Figure 15.8).

39 Unidentified source, quoted in Rürup (1996), 124.

40 Ihler (1936), 8.

41 Hoffmann (1993), 32.



FIGURE 15.8 *Willy Meller, Siegesgöttin (Goddess of Victory), Olympic Games Site, Berlin*

These Olympic commissions marked the end of the National Socialist interest in monumental sculpture in stone, and after 1937 the major Party commissions were for more realistic monumental figures in bronze, inspired by Greek classical precedent, to be set in front of equally gigantic neoclassical buildings, by sculptors such as Arno Breker and Josef Thorak.



FIGURE 15.9 *Albert Speer, Zeppelinfeld, Reichsparteitagsgelände (Party Rally Grounds), Nuremberg, completed 1937*
 ERNST EICHHORN ET AL., *KULISSEN DER GEWALT: DAS REICHSPARTEITAGSGELÄNDE IN NÜRNBERG*, MUNICH: HUGENDUBEL, 1992, P. 63

Neoclassicism was undoubtedly the favored manner of Albert Speer, who succeeded to the position of Hitler's architect after the death of Paul Troost in 1934. His preference for Greek antecedents had been nurtured by his studies at the Technische Hochschule Berlin with Heinrich Tessenow, and confirmed by his great admiration for the masters of early nineteenth-century Prussian classicism, Friedrich Gilly and Karl Friedrich Schinkel. As a student, he had also been taught architectural history by the archaeologist Daniel M. Krencker, who published in 1926 a book with the telling title *Vom Kolossalen in der Baukunst* (On the Colossal in Architecture). Reflecting this local engagement with Greek models, Speer's first work for the Reichsparteitagsgelände (Party Rally Grounds) in Nuremberg, the main tribune for the Zeppelinfeld, was based on the Pergamon Altar in Berlin (Figure 15.9). Speer visited Greece in 1935 and records that he was greatly impressed by the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens. "I shall never forget," he recalled in his memoirs, "how overwhelmed we [Speer and his wife] were by the reconstructed stadium of Athens. Two years later, when I myself had to design a stadium, I borrowed its basic horseshoe form."⁴² Although the plan may have been Athenian, the vast scale of Speer's stadium in

42 Speer (1970), 63.



FIGURE 15.10 *Albert Speer, model of planned stadium, Reichsparteitagsgelände (Party Rally Grounds), Nuremberg, 1937*

ALBERT SPEER AND RUDOLF WOLTERS, *NEUE DEUTSCHE BAUKUNST*,
BERLIN: VOLK UND REICH VERLAG, 1941, P. 57

Nuremberg, with its vaulted substructure and arcaded exterior, was distinctly Roman, which was more in accord with Hitler's own taste (Figure 15.10). For although he paid lip service to the Dorian/Germanic bloodline, Hitler's architectural preferences tended strongly towards Imperial Roman models. As Alex Scobie has noted: "Hitler [...] admired imperial Rome and its efficient militarism, which enabled it to conquer the world. Above all he admired the state architecture of Rome itself, a world capital furnished with monuments that bore everlasting witness to Rome's power and achievements."⁴³ Entirely pragmatically, the structural technology of Roman architecture, based on concrete, the arch, the barrel vault, and the dome lent itself much more easily to building on a massive scale, in contrast to the Greek architecture of column and lintel, whose dimensions are severely constrained by the limited spans possible with a stone lintel. Viewed from Hitler's megalomaniac perspective, however, the monumental architecture of imperial Rome was irrefutably the most convincing model for his thousand-year Reich and his aspirations to world domination.

43 Scobie (1990), 2.

Hitler's first opportunity to see imperial Roman architecture at first hand came with his state visit to Rome in May 1938, which coincided with the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (Augustan Exhibition of the Roman Spirit), whose centerpiece was a model of Rome at the time of Constantine.⁴⁴ On his arrival on 3 May, Hitler's route from the Ostia railway station to the Quirinal Palace took him along the Via dei Trionfi and the Via dell'Impero—both bathed in electric illumination—two of the new axes that Benito Mussolini had driven through Rome to open up the Forum Romanum and the Basilica of Maxentius, and to create an axial approach to the Colosseum. On the way he passed the Arch of Constantine and Basilica of Maxentius, where he spoke to a gathering of German expatriates the following day. Hitler was so taken by the *Mostra Augustea* on 6 May that he insisted on making a second visit the following day, when he also visited the mausoleum of Hadrian, the Pantheon, the Ara Pacis, the Baths of Diocletian, and the Borghese Villa. The impact of this visit on his plans for the rebuilding of Berlin was immense. Alex Scobie elaborates:

At some point on his visit, Hitler spent several hours in the ruins of the Colosseum to meditate on the plans of Ludwig Ruff's Congress Hall, already under construction at the rally grounds in Nuremberg. He also visited the ruins of Caracalla's thermae, which, like Diocletian's baths, was to be echoed in Cäsar Pinnau's Thermen at the southern end of Berlin's north-south axis.⁴⁵

The model of Rome became a leitmotif in the commission that he entrusted to Albert Speer for the remodeling of Berlin as Germania, conceived as a capital city worthy of the thousand-year Reich. On 30 January 1937, Hitler appointed Speer as Inspector-General of Building and head of the *Generalbauinspektion* (GBI), effectively giving him total control over the future development of Berlin. To focus Speer's thoughts, Hitler entrusted to him the drawings of a triumphal arch and of a domed hall, which he had made during his incarceration in Landsberg prison. The basic plan was for two major axes, running north-south and east-west, designed to cross near the existing Brandenburg Gate, with their four extremities linking in to a radial autobahn running around the city, the Berliner Ring. According to official propaganda, the basic idea came from Hitler himself:

44 For a full account of the *Mostra Augustea*, see Joshua Arthurs' essay in this volume.

45 Scobie (1990), 32. For a very detailed account of Hitler's visit to Rome in May 1938, see Scobie (1990), 23–35. See also Marcello's contribution in this volume, "*Forma urbis mussolinii*: Vision and Rhetoric in the Designs for Fascist Rome", as well as the beginning of Fortuna's essay.

Above all, the capital city of the Reich, which had distanced itself intolerably far from the cultural sensitivities of the People, will receive a clear face. The essence of the plan is that a National Socialist Berlin will not be attached superficially to the urban confusion of the liberal city, but rather that the inner structure of the giant city will be altered with revolutionary force and given new form with the greatest constructional clarity. With inspired vision the ordering hand of the Führer has drawn [...] the intersecting axes of the two monumental routes and the four magnificent radials.⁴⁶

In reality this scheme, and particularly the creation of a desperately needed north-south link, derived from a series of earlier plans for Berlin, dating back to the Greater Berlin competition of 1910.⁴⁷

The Great Plaza was located at the intersection of the two axes and flanked by the Führerpalast (Führer Palace), the old Reichstag building, dating back to 1904, the Reichskanzlei (Reich Chancellery), and the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Army Supreme Command). The culmination of these gargantuan buildings was to be the Große Halle (Great Hall), a vast domed structure, reaching a height of 320 meters, with its dome set on a rectilinear base that was to be almost 100 meters high (Figure 15.11). It was designed to hold 150,000–180,000 people, and in the words of its designer, Albert Speer, was “essentially a place of worship.” With the wisdom of hindsight, he added that “without some essentially pseudoreligious background the expenditure for Hitler’s central building would have been pointless and incomprehensible.”⁴⁸

Sacrificial death, inevitably, was the leitmotif of the sacred bond between the Party and the people, and this theme was developed most strongly in the Soldatenhalle (Soldiers’ Hall), designed by Wilhelm Kreis and located on the edge of the Tiergarten south of the Great Plaza. In its general format—a central, columnar block set on a high podium approached by a monumental set of steps, with two flanking wings decorated with relief sculpture—Kreis’ scheme echoed the Pergamon Altar. In the interior, however, the language changed dramatically from Greek to Roman. In the words of one of Speer’s most important colleagues in the GBI, Friedrich Tamms:

46 Troost (1941), 53, 56.

47 See Whyte (2001), 117–143.

48 Speer (1970), 153.



FIGURE 15.11 *Albert Speer, project for the Große Halle and the Great Square, Berlin, 1941*
PRIVATE COLLECTION, LONDON

Its portico recalls the heritage of the West, though in a language that is all its own. Its vast internal barrel vault, with the light flooding in through the portico, is more expressive of the oath of the living than of the legacy of the dead. Only when one descends into the sepulcher that runs as a crypt beneath the whole of the hall, does the massive weight of the vaulting invoke the admonitory presence of that spirit. [...] Here the German people will find an awareness of the finitude of earthly life [...].⁴⁹

49 Tamms (1943), 57.

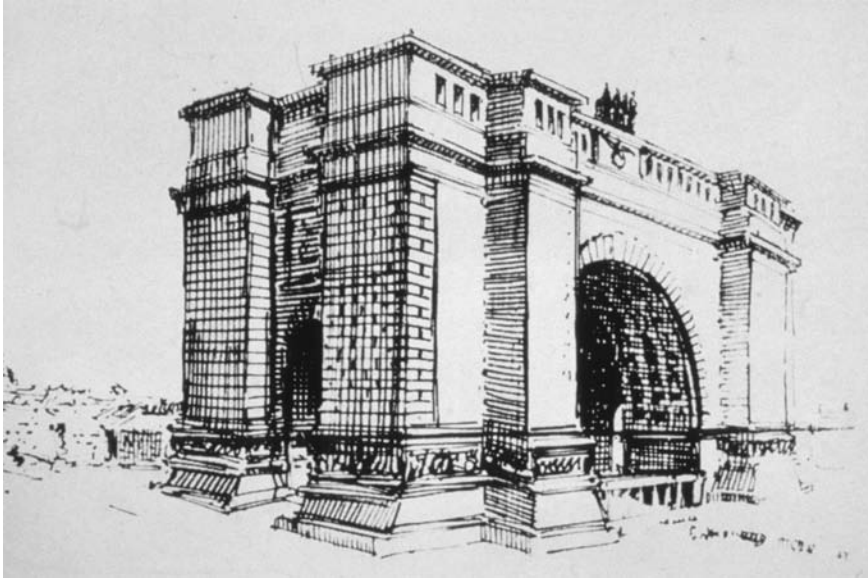


FIGURE 15.12 *Adolf Hitler, drawing of triumphal arch, 1925*
 ALBERT SPEER, *INSIDE THE THIRD REICH*, LONDON: WEIDENFELD &
 NICOLSON, 1970, FACING P. 118

This was to be a monument not only to the dead, but also to those who were about to die: "... an open invitation to die a hero's death."⁵⁰ The stripped down classicism—almost carcass classicism—favored for the Soldatenhalle was typical of the architectural language proposed by the GBI for the two Berlin axes. As one of Kreis' assistants in the GBI explained, simple, austere architecture was best equipped to express great ideas and ambitions: "simple straightforward convictions call for simple, straightforward architectural expression,"⁵¹ a sentiment that sits happily with Speer's attraction to the Doric architecture of column and architrave.

The central section of the North/South axis was anchored at each end by two new stations, which gave Speer the chance to work in a more modernist idiom, to which he was basically sympathetic. It was prefaced on the route southward along the axis by the vast triumphal arch that derived ultimately from Hitler's prison drawings, and was to bear the incised names of all the German dead from World War I (Figure 15.12). This was one of Hitler's favorite elements

50 Schäche (1996), 328; Reichhardt and Schäche (1998), 125–126.

51 Stephan (1939), 10.

in the plan, and a four-meter high model of the arch was made to mark his 50th birthday in April 1939. Speer subsequently bemoaned the doggedness with which Hitler pursued the idea of this triumphal arch, spurning any suggestions for modification. Left more to his own devices at the Southern Station, Speer proposed a singularly modernist, high-tech, steel framed structure with large areas of glass on the external facades. This contrast between a morbid reworking of antiquity and ultra-modernity as part of the same urban renewal scheme was very symptomatic of the National Socialist approach to architecture, which vacillated wildly between traditionalism and modernism, turning variously to the German soil, to the exemplars of antiquity, and to the high-tech triumphs of German science as inspirations for contemporary design. The likes of Himmeler and Rosenberg were advocates of the former strategy, while Speer and Todt pushed for the latter.⁵²

The goal was a new, universal manner of public building, which would somehow combine the emotional resonance of antiquity with the power and functionality of modernity, and which would emerge simply from the inherent dynamism of the political revolution. As one of Speer's apologists, the architect Rudolf Wolters, insisted in typically convoluted prose:

Whoever speaks of "Neoclassicism" at the sight of our great communal buildings has not understood the essence of our building program. This essence lies in the new task, in the great common purpose of our buildings, which are without precedent in their plans and spatial dispositions, and in their urban forms, and which only emerge from the substance of our National Socialistic existence.⁵³

There was, however, absolutely nothing simple about the National Socialist plan for the redevelopment of Berlin. The scale of the enterprise was megalomaniac, the impact on the city immense, and the instrumentalization of a building program on racial grounds unprecedented in modern Europe. As Paul Jaskot and others have shown, the architecture of the Third Reich was predicated not on Athenian ideals of democracy, but on the exploitation of those considered "inferior" by the racist ideologues.⁵⁴ Jewish homes were cleared

52 See (Whyte) 1996. On similar tensions and vacillations in Italian Fascist urban planning, see Flavia Marcello's essay in this volume, "Building the Image of Power: Images of *Romanità* in the Civic Architecture of Fascist Italy."

53 Wolters (1944), 46–47.

54 See Jaskot (2000).

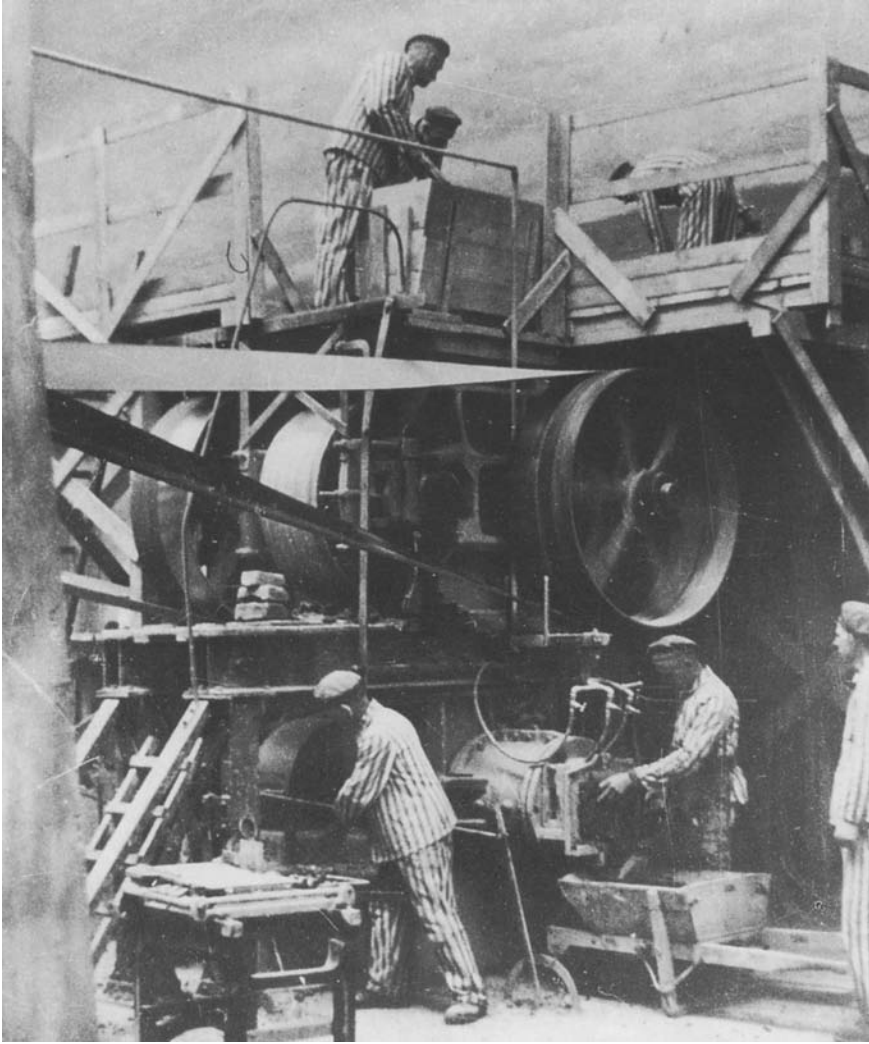


FIGURE 15.13 *The brickworks at Sachsenhausen concentration camp, 1941*
DEUTSCHES HISTORISCHES MUSEUM

in Berlin according to plans drawn up by Speer's GBI to accommodate Aryan families displaced by the building works for Germania. With a terrible irony, some of the displaced Jews were set to work in the concentration camps on the production of building materials essential to the vast construction projects planned not only for Berlin, but for all the major cities in Germany and Austria: bricks at Sachsenhausen and Neuengamme, sand and gravel at Auschwitz, stone at Mauthausen and Flossenbürg, to name only a few of the many camps involved (Figure 15.13). While stripped down Neoclassicism was

an international phenomenon in the western world in the 1930s,⁵⁵ the means of production invented by the National Socialist Party in Germany mark its buildings out as essentially different from the state capitals constructed in the 1930s in the USA, the town halls and university buildings in Europe, or parliament buildings such as the one erected between 1926–1931 in Helsinki.⁵⁶

At the levels of both production and reception, the individual was erased in National Socialist architecture. As Walter Benjamin concluded in a text penned in the year of the Berlin Olympics: “Humankind, which once, in Homer, was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now has become one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached the point where it can experience its own annihilation as a supreme aesthetic pleasure. *Such is the aestheticizing of politics, as practiced by fascism.*”⁵⁷

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55 See Borsi (1987) for a full account of the 1930s neoclassical revival.

56 See Whyte (2003), 18–23.

57 Benjamin (1936), 122.

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Neoclassical Form and the Construction of Power in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany

James J. Fortuna

The *Führer* Visits the Eternal City

On the evening of 3 May 1938, three darkened railcars glided into Rome's freshly constructed Ostiense Station. As the train slowed to a halt, some 500 Germans waited onboard for the guest of honor to disembark. The station hummed with the din of several hundred cheering Italians, their cries of excitement growing louder with every official handshake and camera flash. The guest was led through the pro-Fascist crowd, and finally took his place alongside Italian King Victor Emanuel III in the monarch's horse-drawn carriage.¹ From the platform, the imperial glories of the Palatine Hill could be glimpsed in the distance, beyond the expansive ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. Completed mere months before, Ostiense Station was built with this particular reception in mind, its travertine stone façade an attempt to make this specific visitor feel at home.² Within its pillared portico were sheltered elaborate mosaics, comprised mainly of black and white tesserae, each working to promote the Fascist construction of a glorious Roman past. The eastern wall of the station boasted a relief of Pegasus and Bellerophon, a mythological duo linked by their powerful alliance and heroic fate. As members of Mussolini's *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (National Fascist Party) led their guests out of the station towards the center of Rome, the visitors were paraded past a carefully assembled juxtaposition of ancient and modern urban design. Flames and floodlights illuminated Hitler's procession through the Imperial Fora, under the Arch of Constantine, and around the candle-lit Flavian Amphitheater. Street lamps were draped with swastika banners, and the roads were lined with crowds of enthusiastic Italians jockeying for a glimpse of the parade.³

¹ "Hitler will Get a Ride behind Horses in Rome," *New York Times*, 3 May 1938.

² See Figure 13.9 in ch. 13 above.

³ Istituto Nazionale Luce (1938).

A Diplomatic Mission—or Architectural Research?

The true purpose of this visit continues to vex historians.⁴ Little bureaucratic progress was made from the perspective of either camp, as meaningful political dialogue was kept to a minimum (perhaps indicative of Mussolini's desire to avoid extensive political commitment). It is reasonable to suppose that Hitler's trip south would have been expected to produce a binding pre-war pact between the powers, especially given von Ribbentrop's complaints over the Italians' elusive conversational tone throughout the week.⁵ In any case, the trip stands out not only for its decidedly touristic itinerary, but for its sheer length. For a man who would later prove intent on world dominion, Adolf Hitler rarely ventured beyond the security of his own Reich. Aside from several diplomatic trips around Europe that never lasted more than seventy-two hours at a time, this "official" trip to Rome was to be the highlight of the dictator's experience of international travel.⁶ For an entire week, Nazi officials delighted in the hospitality of their Italian counterparts, touring hand-picked monuments and neighborhoods, many of which had only recently been "beautified" and "restored" to reflect their "true splendor."⁷ While Mussolini could hardly wait to show off his highly-choreographed military displays, the *Führer* was most impressed by Rome's eternal grandeur, and seized every opportunity to take in its revived imperial trappings. When an unexpected rainstorm led to the cancellation of a military demonstration, Hitler jumped at the opportunity to return to the museums and exhibitions which *Il Duce* had long since abandoned in favor of a relaxing night in.⁸ The inclement weather also afforded Hitler the chance to re-visit the Pantheon, this time in private, asking his official guides and histori-

4 Mallett (2000), 161.

5 Schmidt (1951), 79. N.B. The Tripartite Pact, signed in Berlin by Hitler, Ciano of Italy, and Kuruu of Japan, was not authored until 1940; cf. Presseisen (2013), 250–281.

6 Spotts (2009), 322. Spotts notes the *Führer's* "brief visit to Venice in 1934, a cruise along the Norwegian coast, a night in Prague and a quick tour of Warsaw in 1939, a few hours in Paris and Strasbourg as well as a meeting with Franco on the French-Spanish border in June 1940, a short visit to Finland to see Field Marshal Mannheim in 1942 and several hours in Florence to see Mussolini in 1940."

7 Mussolini (1998), 295. Mussolini explains in his autobiography that "Rome is first of all a city with the aura of destiny and history. It is the capital of the New Italy ... I could not refuse the resources necessary to make this magnificent capital city aesthetically beautiful ... By isolating the monuments of ancient Rome, the relation between the ancient Romans and the Italians is made more beautiful and suggestive."

8 Spotts (2009), 324. For more on the Fascist exhibitions of *romanità* and imperial classical heritage, see Joshua Arthurs' chapter in this volume.

ans to wait outside so that he could view “one of the most perfect buildings of all time” in solitude.⁹ The Pantheon would later prove to be the inspiration for the Große Halle, the dome of which would dominate the skyline of Hitler’s *Germania* project, and serve as the focal point of the North-South Axis in Berlin.¹⁰ It seems rather plausible, then, especially considering the projects that Hitler was currently orchestrating at home with Todt and Speer, that this trip might have been intended as more of a research trip than a diplomatic visit. If so, the immediate impact of the journey is unmistakably clear. Fritz Wiedemann, Hitler’s personal adjutant, described the influence of one of the *Führer*’s several visits to the Colosseum that week: “One Sunday afternoon in Rome I had to accompany him there. He studied all the architectural details and the way they affected the overall impression; after our return from Rome he made changes in the design of his Congress Hall (in Nuremberg).”¹¹ Party architect Hermann Giesler (who would later be tasked with redesigning Munich) also recounted his chief patron’s reflections on his time spent in Rome, in particular his return to the Pantheon in private. According to Giesler, Hitler had gushed that “From the time I experienced this building—no description or photograph did it justice—I became interested in its history ... For a short while I stood in this space (the rotunda)—what majesty! I gazed at the large open oculus and saw the universe and sensed what had given this space the name Pantheon—God and the world are one.”¹²

Though the *Führer*’s packed itinerary betrays a genuine interest in many of Mussolini’s freshly fascistized ancient Roman architectural and archaeological sites, it might also foreshadow an important difference in the ways that these men intended to utilize the classical language of architecture, and of antiquity in general, to achieve specific ideological aims. Certainly, within the context of this visit, sites like the Pantheon, the Imperial Fora, and the Colosseum were some of the *Duce*’s most prized showpieces—but to Hitler, they appear to have been objects of genuine reverence and undeniable aesthetic influence. As Whyte has noted, “although he paid lip service to the Doric-Germanic bloodline, Hitler’s architectural preferences tended strongly towards Imperial Roman models.”¹³ This tension, made more severe by the ubiquitous influence of post-Weimar modernist rationale and trends in design, stood to have a direct impact

9 Schram (1986), 62.

10 See Figure 15.11 in ch. 15 above.

11 Wiedemann (1964), 87–88.

12 Giesler (1977), 30.

13 Whyte, this volume.

on the National Socialist brand of (purportedly) functional neoclassicism that would come to redefine the German urban landscape. Fascist Italy, meanwhile, having quite confidently begun to recognize itself as the rightful heir to the Rome of Augustus, grappled with its own aesthetic orientation while erecting some surprisingly inventive, yet at times rather incongruous, structures across its new empire. Despite the overt displays of unity that would superficially define this diplomatic visit, in this single point of intersection, we can see how the architectural production of each regime may have come to echo this different disposition towards the classical past. Through comparative analysis, this chapter will work to make sense of the key differences between the classically-inflected architectural productions and built environments of each regime, while also considering their role within the totalitarian mission of cultural renewal.

Iconography and the “Religion” of Fascism

The ceremonial pomp and circumstance of the *Führer*’s first trip to Rome was, by some accounts, an affair that felt decidedly religious in its tone and solemn orchestration. Pope Pius XI regarded the visit as the “apotheosis” of the Rome-Berlin Axis.¹⁴ The trip surely bolstered Hitler’s cultic status, as the world and its media representatives looked upon the “German Invasion of Italy” with fascination.¹⁵ As at least two generations of scholars have noted, the religiosity of fascism was key to its success. As a revolutionary ideology, fascism was predicated upon what Roger Griffin calls “palinogenesis,” or rebirth, and, in order to achieve the “populist ultranationalism” upon which it thrived, fascism had to be molded around a “mythic core” of rebirth and renewal.¹⁶ In both regimes, the mythic core so central to Griffin’s widely-accepted understanding of fascism took the form of a mythic past. For their respective populations, Italian Fascism and German National Socialism were to serve as the Phoenix to the smoldering ashes of the First World War, and offered a largely despondent populace the opportunity for a fresh start.¹⁷ To galvanize the population and

14 Pius XI (1959). See also Baxa (2007), 238. Baxa claims that the Pontiff was so offended by the National Socialists’ lack of interest in the opinion of the Holy See that he left town, “literally turning off the lights” at the Vatican until the German contingent had returned home.

15 Schmidt (1951), 80–81.

16 Griffin (1993), 26.

17 For a brief overview of the mythic transformation of each nation, see Knox (2000), 122–

harness its potential to yield supporters, laborers, and eventually soldiers, the citizens of each nation were reminded of their proud cultural heritage, a tactic unique only in the unabashed embellishment and perpetual selectivity of its promotion of a unifying national-historical narrative. What makes this tactic particularly interesting is the way in which it relied upon the ever-persuasive language of classical architecture to supplement its ideological calls to action. These regimes found a certain authority in their invocation of classical patrimony, and sought to express this authority through monumental building projects that were supposed to reinforce their weighty and eternal place in history. Although their goals may have been similar, each government, under the direct influence of its respective dictator, came to establish a unique dialect of the modernist neoclassical language that would prove central to their resurgent nation's self-image.

The Convenience of Context

Early in his forty-year reign as Rome's first emperor, Augustus (somewhat misleadingly) promoted, not a new government, but the restoration of an old one, a type of government plucked from the context of what might have been regarded as a better time, a period of grandeur and prosperity.¹⁸ Like the Romans, Hitler and Mussolini shared a nostalgic view of a past Germany, a past Italy, past empire and influence. This romanticism manifests itself in each regime's propagation of various folk movements, their reliance on ultra-rightwing rhetoric, and the most tangible aspect of their legacy: grandiose monuments, intended both to commemorate the past and to celebrate the present and future power of the revived nation. This nationalistic ethos, then, clearly transcends the innumerable brick and mortar construction projects and civic works projects that remain scattered across Europe. Meanwhile, complementary to this explosion of material development, there existed a powerful propaganda machine, and the execution of image-crafting on a scale possibly unseen since the age of Augustus. However, the image created was as focused on a refashioned national-historical narrative as it was upon the leadership cult itself.

126. For an engaging study of urban culture in the service of Italian Fascism, see Pooley (2013).

18. For more on the Augustan "Restoration of the Republic", see Zanker (1990), 101.

In Italy, we see Mussolini impress upon the nation his concept of *romanità*, or “roman-ness”. With a dependent nod toward the purported glories of ancient Rome, Mussolini sought to rebuild his “New Rome” in the image of the ancient empire he thought he understood.¹⁹ In Germany, a nation still reeling from the burdens heaped upon its population following the Treaty of Versailles, we see the new leadership maintaining a slightly different relationship with an equally illusory past. The massive, seemingly endless building projects commissioned by the National Socialist government harnessed the authority vested in classical form and ethos in an effort to aggressively promote its New World Order. Hitler’s *Germania* project intended to return to his followers the glory and distinction he felt they deserved. Like his Italian counterpart, the *Führer* invoked the authority of the ancients in his efforts to prompt such a national revolution.

In the 1970s, Albert Speer claimed that the architecture produced by his organization was “not unique.”²⁰ The former Chief Architect and Minister of Armaments of National Socialist Germany turns to the classical stylization of projects in cities such as Washington, Moscow, and London in an attempt to illustrate his point. The implication here is that Speer’s architecture was merely the product of its time, and that it was no more nor less remarkable than the architectural production of his American, Russian, or English peers. However, any assertion of similarity between the projects of any of these cities can only be treated as superficial, at best. Aside from the very basic structural differences between the most academically classical twentieth-century forms found in each city,²¹ none of these structures were designed with an ideological impulsion that even remotely resembled the ideological thrust behind Speer’s Hitlerian projects, which had once been tactically distributed across Germany. This example is crucial to our understanding of the power and relevance of context. Context unequivocally offers up the root of difference in meaning, and is therefore what distinguishes the true significance of one building from another. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of Speer’s unfounded comparison. There were, as Larsson points out, fundamental differences in

19 Fascist propaganda went to great lengths to distinguish between the “First, Second, and Third Rome.” The first Rome was the “Rome of the Caesars,” the second, Christian Rome, the third, Fascist Rome (on the intersections between the latter two Romes, see Jan Nelis’ chapter in this volume). For Flavia Marcello’s full-text translation of Mussolini’s “La Nuova Roma” speech, see chapter 14 above. For more on Mussolini’s “superficial knowledge of the classical world,” see Nelis (2007).

20 Speer (1969), 81.

21 Some of the most identifiable elements of National Socialist architecture, its generous use of the pilaster, for instance, are noticeably absent from each of these examples.

the circumstances surrounding the conception and production of American (as well as Soviet and British) architecture, not least its readily acknowledged “widespread eclecticism.”²² It seems, however, that the totalitarian imprint on neoclassicism would leave the style forever changed. After the traditional mode comes into contact with such divisive ideology, its form is taken captive by new versions of “traditional” motifs and patterns. To some, classical forms would be forever linked with tyranny and megalomania, a reactionary style that quite naturally fitted the image of the fascist New World Order. As Léon Krier has noted, “classical architecture was implicitly condemned to a heavier sentence than Speer the Reichsminister” during the postwar Nuremberg trials.²³

Staging the Rebirth of Empire

In 1922, as Mussolini’s grasp on power strengthened, the bombastic rhetorician began to act upon his desires to resurrect the image of Italy’s capital city. For the urban planners and designers within the newly formed *Governatorato* (the municipal government established by Mussolini), such a task would draw almost exclusively upon the historicized representation of a disgraced Rome.²⁴ Smothered by centuries of medieval clutter and grime, the contemporary consensus appeared to have been that Rome and her majesty had been dishonored; instead, the veritable motherland of western culture and civic structure had been forced to don the unsightly rags of a neglected peasant—looking on while her northern sisters in Florence, Bologna, Turin, and Milan flourished as artistic and intellectual strongholds. It seems that Rome’s unenviable status was never lost on Mussolini, who, until relatively late into his political career, remained committed to living and working from cosmopolitan and prosperous Milan.²⁵ Mussolini’s disdain for Rome was so severe, in fact, that, as a young man, the opinionated journalist once described Rome as “a parasitic city of landladies, shoeshine boys, prostitutes, priests and bureaucrats, Rome—a city without a genuine proletariat—is not the center of the nation’s political life, but rather the source of its infection.”²⁶ What the expert propagandist came to see in

22 Larsson (2013), 243.

23 Krier (2013), xi.

24 Cf. Marcello, chapter 14 above.

25 Arthurs (2012), 9.

26 Mussolini (1978), vol. 3, 190–191. Quoted in Arthurs (2012), 9.

Rome, however, was its endless potential to provide a material backdrop to his Party's cause. The "myth of Rome," as he called it, was soon to become Italian Fascism's "point of departure and point of reference; it is our symbol or, if you prefer, our myth. We dream of a Roman Italy, wise and strong, disciplined and imperial. Much of what was once the immortal spirit of Rome has risen again in Fascism: our *Littorio* is Roman, our military organization is Roman, our pride and our courage are Roman. *Civis Romanus Sum*."²⁷ *Il Duce* made this declaration on 21 April 1922, the 2,675th anniversary of the city's legendary founding. While this occasion is often remembered for its ceremonious fanfare, it also marks the true beginnings of the implementation of the Fascist cultural program that would soon ingratiate itself with a still somewhat skeptical Italian populace.

Mussolini's eagerness to map his epic narrative of cultural superiority onto Rome's architectural endowment has led some experts to regard both the newly constructed Fascist sites and the fascistized ancient structures as physical forces of consent-inspiring legitimation. As Flavia Marcello indicates, the harnessing of these sites' rhetorical potential, along with the calculated destruction of urban areas that stood in contrast with the regime's self-image, "created spaces for the ritual and spectacle" that would so effectively reinforce the concept of *romanità*.²⁸ By ceremoniously carving away any neighborhood that stood in the way of the Fascist plan to physically resurrect tangible testaments to a unifying national past (a process known as *sventramento*, or "disemboweling"),²⁹ Mussolini's archaeologists and draftsmen would be given ample opportunity to further articulate the Party's message. Through the construction of modern buildings, monuments, and complexes, Italy's contrived classical heritage was transmitted through the large-scale transformation of the Eternal City's topography.

However, Marcello's concept of a totalitarian "theater of consent" in architectural terms need not be confined to the Fascist city of Rome, or even to the Italian interwar experience. Of course, as Marcello explains, the systematic modification of large urban areas and the creation of "channels of representational space" formed a critical element of the Fascist regime's ability to transmit ideological messages.³⁰ It was this public space, designed and built with very

27 Mussolini (1951), vol. 27, 269, also quoted in Arthurs (2012), 1.

28 Marcello, chapter 14 in the present volume.

29 Cecchi (1937).

30 For more on "the theater of consent", see Flavia Marcello's chapter on "Vision and Rhetoric in the Designs for Fascist Rome" in the present volume.

specific functions in mind, that would provide the Party with a setting from which it would be able to further advance its ideological and rhetorical mission. These camera-friendly structures would ultimately transform place and space into a political ideology, constituting the *mise en scène* of the ritualistic Fascist performance and spectacle that was always intended to complement the pride-soaked propaganda disseminated via cinemas and newsreel footage across Mussolini's "new empire".³¹ Quite obviously, though, save for the Fascists' policy of *sventramento*,³² this process is all but mirrored in the National Socialists' construction and subsequent showcasing of their interpretation of classical form and ritual. In many ways, Leni Riefenstahl's internationally-acclaimed films, and their monumental articulation of a destiny-bound, united Germany, actually suggest that the National Socialists were even more successful than the Italian Fascists in their ability to establish, populate, and even sell out the "theater of consent" which was so crucial to the domestic totalitarian mission.

Italian Fascist Cultural Renewal and the Built Environment

The Fascist program of cultural renewal was by no means confined to the Italian peninsula. Popular press outlets, tourist agencies, and global news organizations became saturated with reports on the honor and prestige reintroduced by Mussolini's still nascent government. As magazines hurried to print the eye-catching, ruin-filled travel ads of the state-subsidized *Ente Nazionale Industrie Turistiche*, Fascist Italy continued to rebrand itself while plotting its course toward total reclamation of imperial glory. *National Geographic* correspondent John Patric recounted the powerful scene he encountered while on assignment in *Il Duce's* Rome: "I stood under Benito Mussolini's office window after Addis Ababa fell ... The Roman Empire was reborn that night. Later it was named, *"L'Impero Italiano"*, yet Romans rule it as surely as their fathers from the near-by

31 For more on the transformation of place into coherent political ideology see Jerram (2011). On the Fascist "political communication strategy that favored gesture and performance over text," see Berezin (2007), 46; also Marcello, chapter 14 in the present volume. For an image of Speer's Zeppelinfeld in Nuremberg, the setting for many of the major *Reichsparteitage* (Party Rallies) made famous by the propaganda efforts of Riefenstahl and Goebbels, see Figure 15.9 in ch. 15 above.

32 Although, as Whyte mentions in his chapter in the present volume, there are certainly parallels with the process of *sventramento* in the Nazi disregard for the domestic space of Jewish families in areas of Berlin during the early phases of Speer's *Germania* project; for more on this, see e.g. Jaskot (2000).

forum ruled most of the world they knew. Empires have fallen. This one—and this one alone—has risen again.”³³ The success of the Italian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World’s Fair, designed by architect Michele Busiri Vici, also drew international attention, and indeed, critical acclaim, thanks to its “ingenuous [*sic*] synthesis of the architecture of Classical Rome and Modern Italy.”³⁴

The international scholarly community also recognized, and in certain cases commended, the highly publicized government-led efforts to unearth Italy’s classical heritage. One American classicist went so far as to publish an article attempting to identify an ancient Roman precedent for the behavior, discourse, and new policies of the Fascist leadership. A 1928 article published in *The Classical Journal* promotes the understanding of “Italian character” as an innate disposition—one determined as much by geography as genealogy: “Can such an inheritance of history and romance fail to be ingrained in the nature and thinking of the Italian people? Even though the present Roman possesses none of the old Roman blood, yet he still lives on the same hills, by the same Tiber, beneath the same sky, surrounded by the same mountains. Above the ground and beneath it are the tangible remains of ancient Roman civilization, symbols of power once almost fabulous. These things, which do not change, have molded the Roman, the Italian character.”³⁵ It seems that, to the author, there was no question but that the people of twentieth-century Italy would welcome a new mode of existence modeled on the prosperous leadership of ancient Imperial Rome. Under Fascism, they were finally given an opportunity, and the outcome was hardly cause for distress. Wagener goes on to praise the excavations that “laid bare” the ancient fora, the *Umbilicus Urbis Romae* (“the navel of the city of Rome”), and celebrates the fact that certain sites are “now rid of encumbering dirt and buildings.”³⁶ The state’s commitment to reorganizing its urban space so as to create “a vast zone in the heart of the city where one can relive the glorious events of the past on the very ground and amid the very surroundings with which they were enacted,”³⁷ was also treated positively by the author, and afforded the Italian people direct access to the most important

33 Patric (1937), 269.

34 Anon. (1939), 105. See Barisione (2013), 30. See Figure 13.12 in ch. 13 above for a rendering of Busiri Vici’s 1939 Italian Pavilion.

35 Wagener (1928), 670.

36 Wagener (1928), 671. This sentiment is shared by *National Geographic*’s John Patric who, in reference to the *Governatorato*’s excavation projects, wrote in 1937 that “This isolation program is remarkable. Old ruins are more imposing if surrounded by parks and squares instead of slums.” (1937, 279).

37 Wagener (1928), 671.

“tangible evidences of imperial grandeur”³⁸ which would come to define the only favorable elements of the Fascist legacy in Italy.

Wagener was not alone in his belief that the Italian people were somehow genetically predisposed to yearn for an imperialistic social structure and international dominance. Two years earlier, the *Literary Digest* quoted a piece by Cecil Roberts that had been published in the *London Westminster Gazette*. Roberts claims to see a similar “inborn instinct for empire” in the Italian people, and suggests that “every time Mussolini rattles a sword or sounds the bugle-call, the blood of ancient Romans, founders of a vast empire, leaps in their veins.”³⁹ In accounting for these examples, we can score a clear victory for the wing of the Italian Fascist Party dedicated to the promulgation of a new, carefully-crafted national-historical narrative. This narrative, along with its material consequences (Rome’s “new spatiotemporal and symbolic order”),⁴⁰ might best be interpreted as Mussolini’s shrewd attempt to bridge the gap between *imperium* and *auctoritas*.⁴¹

National Socialist Cultural Renewal and the Built Environment

For no less than twelve years, from Hitler’s seizure of absolute power to his demise beneath the rubble-laden streets of Berlin, the German landscape was dramatically transformed. The changes in Germany were not entirely superficial, as the emphasis on urban redesign and widespread commission of monumental building projects reinforced the major, ostensibly popular, swing in political ideology. This change had afforded the new government with an opportunity to present its constituency with an updated, heroic national narrative. Each project which represented this broader national-historic narrative was to play a role in the transmission of a rejuvenated sense of Germanic pride. Each project, conceived and designed in the unique language of National Socialist neoclassicism, provided a vehicle for the communication of the Hitlerian notion of nationalism and supremacy. These messages, scripted by Hitler, and transmitted through the material output of Speer, Giesler, Troost, Wiedemann, or any number of his trusted architects, were received and consumed by

38 Wagener (1928), 672.

39 “The Mussolini Empire,” *Literary Digest*, 6 March 1926, 18–19.

40 What Kallis refers to as Rome’s “new urban syntax”; see Kallis (2012), 46.

41 For a concise explanation of Hannah Arendt’s understanding of *auctoritas*, as well as its legacy and relationship to a “modern loss of memory,” see Hammer (2015).

a German populace that was being primed and prepared for a large-scale war. It is easy to consider the nationalistic ethos and hubris communicated by these building projects as an ingredient of the fatefully intoxicating cocktail which prompted the same pan-Germanic fervor that enabled the Nazi government to spend almost an entire year publicly looking for an excuse for war. But these buildings, distinctive in style and tone, aggressively gripped the international community as well, albeit for different reasons.

By the close of the 1937 Paris Exposition, the world had found ample opportunity to recognize Germany's commitment to self-reinvention. Speer's German Pavilion not only earned the Germans a gold medal, but made an enormous statement with regard to the Third Reich's newly exalted opinion of itself.⁴² Its imposing structural dominance was to be understood as an expression of power and superiority that mirrored the primacy of Germanic culture and tradition. For many, this display was evidence of a disturbing psychological inclination on behalf of the Reich leadership—one that should be recognized as the precursor to the type of nationalistic posturing that was to draw the continent into destructive war less than three years later. Consequently, for some of those who confronted these designs from a distance, the specific form came to be seen as synonymous with totalitarianism.⁴³ By evaluating the building projects of Germany's five "*Führer* Cities,"⁴⁴ we will present the opportunity to understand more fully the relationship between form and function as it pertains to the representation of a classically-rooted Germanic cultural heritage. To what extent can we discern a coherent, statewide neoclassical style from the extant buildings, the photographs of the since-destroyed projects, or the relatively well-preserved future plans for the German urban landscape? Based on how few of Giesler's plans for Munich were actually realized, it appears that this city, for example, may have fallen short of its potential to be remade and reinvented as the Party's mythical holy land and the "architectural representation of the movement."⁴⁵ Nevertheless, like most Hitlerian civic utopias, the urban planning of the Reich's most sacred city included a unique brand of classicism—and therefore a spiritually eternal—aesthetic touch. Addressing the NSDAP in July 1931, Hitler expressed

42 Fiss (2009), 102–103.

43 Krier (2013), iiix–ix. This condemnation of classical style is unjustified, according to Krier.

44 Each *Führerstadt*, or *Führer* City, was designated by Hitler himself, and all five were slated to be transformed into centers of renewed political and cultural significance by 1950. They were: Munich, Nuremberg, Berlin, Hamburg, and Linz. For more on this, see Spotts (2009).

45 Nerdinger (2008), 48.

his desire to see Munich blossom into a city of global significance, complete with the “enchanting magic of a Mecca or Rome.”⁴⁶

Because the extant sketches and plans for the five *Führer* cities suggest that the Party’s aesthetic preferences had been rather eclectic, Iain Boyd Whyte’s assertion that the “ultimate meaning” of National Socialist architecture can be found in its “celebration of death and sacrifice” should prompt fresh discussion regarding our ability to make sense of Nazi architecture’s ostensibly broad and flexible role within interwar German society.⁴⁷ Certainly, this novel perspective could stand to reinforce the fact that National Socialist architecture, in perpetual search for a codified language of state-sponsored urban design, was far from having achieved its goal. If the architectural output of the Nazi regime can only be evaluated through its ability to effectively advance its cultic worship of fallen Party members and heroic Germans, then we may only be able to consider its architecture monumental. Though this “morbid fixation”⁴⁸ would aid the Party in its aggressive attempts to achieve the type of ideological reform deemed so crucial to Griffin’s understanding of the fascist “mythic core” discussed above, it is difficult to identify a specific structural or aesthetic detail that make the National Socialist plans for the new central station in Munich or Berlin more “death-obsessed” than any of the railway stations built across Italy after Mussolini’s rise to power in 1922. As Marcello has suggested, many Fascist-sponsored railway stations were known for their almost transgressive stylistic plurality; the afore-mentioned Ostiense in Rome and Santa Maria Novella in Florence in particular; each generated considerable contemporary discussion, not only for their variety in ornamentation and *romanità*-infused classical form, but for the ways in which this inventiveness may have interacted with their unambiguously modern function.⁴⁹ It is important to note, then, that the concept of martyrdom and self-sacrifice, also an important sub-theme of *romanità*, was not explicitly (or exclusively) mapped onto every totalitarian, or even National Socialist building project. With this understanding, despite National Socialist architecture’s severe and morose tone, its ultimate meaning must extend beyond its associations with the widely-acknowledged National Socialist death cult. Since the ability to document and showcase technologi-

46 Hitler to the NSDAP committee, 14 July 1921, quoted in Jäckel and Kuhn (1980), 381. Again, we see here the type of fascist religiosity so well understood by Roger Griffin and Ian Kershaw, who has called this type of intoxicating cultic veneration the “drug” of the *Führer* myth; cf. Kershaw (2001), 396; also Paxton (1998).

47 Whyte, chapter 15 above.

48 Whyte, chapter 15 above.

49 See Figure 13.1 in chapter 13 above.

cal innovation, especially through a dynamically modernist dialect of classicism, proved as critical to the Fascist *stile littorio* as to National Socialism's own architectural brand, the distinctions between civic and monumental architecture have proven difficult to detect.⁵⁰ Thus, Whyte's efforts to identify National Socialist architecture's "morbid fixation" may actually signal an important division between two different strains of totalitarian design. While the solemn monumentality of Troost's Ehrentempel or Kreis' Soldatenhalle seems to be more concerned with transmitting messages of nationalistic sacrifice and reinforcing the death-cult to a domestic audience, the civic architecture of Speer's superficially neoclassical⁵¹ Olympiastadion or Giesler's new railway station in Munich stress the otherwise reactionary Party's embrace of modernity for a much broader, international audience. This subtle split between monumental and civic design, compounded by the inherent intertextual prejudices of Party draftsmen, might help to explain the variety of National Socialist architecture.

Conclusion

More than sixty years after the downfall of these two brutal regimes, a certain totalitarian legacy lives on in their respective countries. Although the politics of this dark period have long since disappeared, elements of each regime's material production have yet to be erased from the national consciousness—and, in some cases, from the national landscape. Present-day Germany and Italy each maintain very different relationships with their dictatorial pasts. These differences are made abundantly clear upon even the most casual visit to either country—in Rome, sports fans still pass by *Il Duce's* name etched into *Il Monolito* (Figure 16.1) each time they attend a soccer match in the Olympic Stadium of the former Foro Mussolini. In Munich, by contrast, years of vegetation grow over the fractured remains of the Ehrentempel (Figure 16.2), the limestone never having been cleared following the shrine's destruction in 1946. Gener-

50 For more on the ways in which *stile littorio* "interrupted the triumphant procession of fascist modernism," see Fogu (2003), 178–184.

51 Whyte notes that, according to Speer, Hitler himself apparently influenced the final appearance of the stadium by demanding that the steel and glass were removed in favor of a more truly "Olympian" design. As a result, the already-built steel skeleton of the structure was covered in natural stone (Whyte, chapter 15 above; see Figures 15.6 and 15.7 in the same chapter for varying perspectives of the stadium). Ladd (1997, 142) indicates that there continues to be some scholarly disagreement regarding the "genesis and identity" of the stadium.



FIGURE 16.1 Il Monolito, 2015. *The sixty-foot tall obelisk was erected in 1932 and fashioned from a 300-ton cut of Carrara marble*
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

ations of Germans have remained committed to reclaiming their history—or at least reclaiming their public spaces. Most of the buildings discussed above were deemed salvageable, serviceable structures in need of relatively



FIGURE 16.2 *The remains of Troost's Ehrentempel and a north-facing view of the former Führerbau, which presently houses the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München, 2015*

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

simple cosmetic refinement. The emphasis then, was placed on the removal of ideologically-driven imagery and iconography—the converted Führerbau and Verwaltungsbau der NSDAP were put to immediate use following the dismantling of the swastika-bearing eagles which once adorned each building's stately façade. These observations are an important part of this analysis, as this chapter seeks to weigh the messages encoded in the years of interwar architecture against the context of a specific regime within a specific period of time.

As noted above, the language of National Socialist architecture purported to present itself as a clearly articulated and easily identifiable reinforcement of Germanic ideals. Since public opinion shifted irretrievably away from the regime as the war progressed, it remains difficult to measure the success Hitler's

architects might have enjoyed in this regard during the interwar period. What is clear, however, is that the Nazi leadership was guided by its own interpretation of the Doric order in its development of this language. The emphasis placed upon the development of a homogeneous Reich not only transcended architectural design, but was also almost certainly reinforced by it. This would not have been possible without the wilful manipulation of the almost mystical authority of ancient civilization. In more generalizing terms than his Italian counterpart, Hitler publicly drew on his own fantastical interpretation of classical history in order to historicize his own time. The National Socialist desire to establish a uniform style of state architecture could stem from a set of foundational struggles that their Italian peers were never forced to overcome. Because the Fascists were more successful in their early attempts to “seize the streets” in order to communicate their socio-political message of revolution, they were able to harness the forces of public attention and spectacle early on in the process of urban and cultural transformation which defined the interwar years of both nations.⁵² This offered the Fascists a base of power from which to amplify the *Duce*’s message of cultural regeneration, even before he set out to physically reconfigure large swathes of Italian land and historical memory. The Nazis’ initial struggles to control and use public urban spaces in a similar way might explain the Party’s insinuating attempts at cultural regeneration as a projection of its latent anxieties. If this was indeed the case, the Party’s appetite for order and ideological coherence takes on an additional layer of meaning.

In the case of Mussolini, attempts to reassemble the Augustan-era oligarchical structure followed a great purge—the Rome of *Il Duce*’s desire could only be realized through calculated destruction. The considerable demolition projects, which predated the more reputable Fascist construction projects, force us to reconsider our understanding of cultural production. The structures, sculptures, mosaics and fountains which fill the Foro Mussolini and EUR (Figures 16.3 and 16.4), for instance, are very obvious examples of interwar cultural production, yet we should also consider the leveling of the residential areas near the Theater of Marcellus or the Mausoleum of Augustus as a distorted form of cultural production, as well.⁵³ As mentioned above, throughout Mussolini’s reign, the regime justified its “gutting” of central Rome in the name of destiny, hygiene, fate, or honor. The creation of the Via dei Fori Imperiali, Via del Mare, and Via della Conciliazione between 1922 and 1945 did much more to change

52 See Jerram (2011), 51.

53 See Kostof (1994), 1–10.



FIGURE 16.3 *Romulus and Remus surrounded by the fasces-bearing personification of Rome and six of the nine muses along Foro Mussolini's Piazzale dell'Impero, 2015*
PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

the face of Rome than the erection of monuments and buildings. Each new project was, in some way, tied into the concept of *romanità*, and was intended to stand as a testament to the enduring greatness of the Roman spirit. The ability to redesign a city according to the will of *Il Duce* was a testament not only to his power and ambition, but to Fascism's idea of a modernity fueled by reverence for the classical past.

As fascist orators aestheticized politics, so too, did fascist constructors. In both nations, it seems clear that the process of building was as important as the final product, as symbolic as the buildings themselves. The subordination of specific materials, though perhaps more common in Speer's later, larger projects of Nuremberg and Berlin than in Troost's Munich, was cause for celebration, and a testament to Italian or German prosperity and aptitude for technical engineering.⁵⁴ The publicity generated by the construction projects in both cities suggests as much, while the completed buildings were quickly regarded as significant accomplishments. The conscious choice of aesthetic

54 See Jaskot (2000); Homze (1967), 89–97.



FIGURE 16.4 Genius of Fascism statue, Italo Griselli, 1939. In front of the EUR's Palazzo degli Uffici, 2015

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

style in each of these buildings remains a source of debate amongst scholars dedicated to determining just how classical these structures can actually claim to be.

Though in direct conversation with one another, the German and Italian governments appear to have projected very different understandings of the relationship between history, aesthetics, and power. Some historians have chosen to label Hitler's buildings as the ultimate examples of functionalist neoclassicism, and quickly point to their own suggestions that many of the structures were large out of necessity—in their ability to accommodate the gathering of thousands of individuals under one state-funded roof, these massive spaces would enable the Party to “prove” popular support for the totalitarian regime.⁵⁵ It is with this understanding that I begin to question the assertion that the architecture produced by these two regimes was a form of functionalist neoclassicism. Even if Mussolini's architects had found room for a newfangled type of Vitruvian rationalism in some of their projects, Troost's symbolic honor tem-

55 Larsson (2013), 240.

ples and Giesler's megalomaniacal designs for a future Munich were hardly guided by principles of functionality and reason. With a total disregard for the Weimar-era principles of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Sobriety), fascist architecture set out, as Larsson rightly notes, to "make a bold display of its rejection of functionalism" in favor of its own interpretation of classicism.⁵⁶ It would be difficult to argue that even one marble foot of the sixty which make up *Il Monolito* in Rome serves some functional purpose. Few completed totalitarian projects so boldly celebrate the fascist rejection of functionalist design as the grand entrance to the Foro Mussolini, or Giesler's plans for the obelisk on the east-west axis of Munich.

Fascist design, then, just like fascist rhetoric, plundered the classical past to weave together its own image of the present. Despite their stylistic differences, this obsession with antiquity and classical heritage is what unites the architectural production of these two totalitarian regimes. Sustained through a hideous combination of romanticism, militarization, slave labor, and fear, the misappropriation of the classical world and its associated aesthetic was central to the totalitarian ability to leave the urban landscapes of Germany and Italy forever changed.

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56 Larsson (2013), 233. Larsson explains that this public break is exactly what makes National Socialist architecture "reactionary" in principle.

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